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C Armstrong

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MEMOIR AND SERMONS

OF

REV. WM. J. ARMSTRONG, D.D.

LATE SECRETARY OF AM. BD. OF COM. FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS.

Edited by

REV. HOLLIS READ.

NEW YORK:
PUBLISHED BY M. W. DODD,
CORNER OF SPRUCE STREET AND CITY HALL SQUARE.

1853.

C Armstrong

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over our missions, amputating limbs from the body, disbanding schools, crippling the press, dismissing native laborers, and in every way retarding the whole work. Those were dark days; and had the only dark feature been that the Board was now, for the first time, obliged to recede from its noble resolution to send abroad every suitable man who should offer himself, the revulsion would have been sufficiently disastrous. To be compelled to recede here; to be obliged to say to young men who were desirous and ready to go to the heathen, "we cannot send you," produced a revulsion in the work which years have not fully repaired.

Dr. Armstrong came to the work for such a day as this. A crisis was to be passed, which should call into action the experience and wisdom, the zeal and perseverance, of the best and wisest men in the church. Armstrong bore his full share in this emergency. Not only a crisis was to be met, a reduced treasury to be replenished, and a supply of missionary agents to be secured, when once, and for the first time, our Colleges and Theological Seminaries had heard the announcement made that the Board could *not* send out *all* who should be willing to go, but a *reaction* was to be encountered. The evil was felt, deeply felt, in all departments of the work, and each of the Secretaries of the Board, and the Prudential Committee, bore a noble share in the work at this crisis. Yet it was in Dr. Armstrong's department, as Secretary of Home Correspondence and Superintendent of Agencies, where the remedy must be more especially applied; and how he addressed himself to the duties of his office at this critical juncture, how he met the crisis, how he encountered the reaction, let the prosperous condition of the Board for the last eight or ten years, and the increasing missionary spirit in the churches, tell. The ship was almost stranded, masts broken, sails riven, winds adverse, and

the fearful and the faint-hearted verily thought she must founder—at least, that she would not soon be seen sailing on a smooth sea, sails full, and breeze fair. But so it was. A few years repaired the disaster; the churches resumed a more healthful tone than before; the schools of the prophets were not "disobedient to the heavenly vision;" they were ready to go far away to the Gentiles; the silver and the gold replenished the treasury of the Lord; disbanded schools were again collected; presses again resumed their labors; new missionaries were sent out, new stations commenced; and, after a few short years, the friends of Missions forgot the past in the auspicious present. But this state of the work was not brought about but by the untiring zeal, the sound judgment, the pious perseverance, and the fervent prayers, of the chief agents of the Board. Thanks for the men who, under God, conducted the Board, and the missionary work, so successfully through this crisis.

And here, especially, do we trace the footsteps of the justly lamented Armstrong. It was his province especially to stand in the breach, and nobly did he fulfil this mission. To no man does the church owe a greater debt of gratitude; he fulfilled his mission, and the Lord took him. How kindly, how tenderly, with what persevering fidelity, how judiciously, he addressed himself to the work given him to do, the pastors and churches who enjoyed his labors will bear a willing testimony.

The Sermons which make up so large a portion of the volume, constitute a part of the Memoir. They are, in a sense *historical;* they indicate the condition of the church during the period in question; the means adapted to rouse her to duty; the principles which were needed to be inculcated; the views of Gospel truth, or the particular truths which the condition of the church required to be urged upon her, and the

motives to action which ought to be set before her. Yet Dr. Armstrong is but partially represented as a *preacher* by his written sermons; his earnestness of manner, and unction of spirit, are but poorly delineated on paper. These, which more particularly gave the character to his preaching, sought expression rather through the free channels of extemporaneous delivery.

The conversion of Dr. Armstrong adds another to the number of delightful instances of a blessing following parental fidelity on the occasion of a son's *first leaving home*, to go abroad in the wide world. This is an important crisis in a young man's life. Abram is believed to have been first awakened, and brought to a knowledge of the true God, on the occasion of *his going from home*. There is no evidence of his piety till, in his loneliness, as he wandered towards the land of Canaan, "the Lord appeared unto him, and there built he an altar unto the Lord." And may we not, with yet more probability, affirm the same of Jacob? We hear nothing of his personal piety; of his personal recognition of God as *his* God, till after that notable night, in which, in his loneliness, he lay himself down on the earth upon his pillow of stones. He had just cut himself off from the protection, the tenderness, and the sympathies of the parental roof; he felt helpless, defenceless, lonely; it was, perhaps, his first night from home; the occasion of the departure had deeply affected him; he thought of the pious counsels of his father, of the tears and prayers of his mother. In the absence of parental counsel and maternal tenderness, he felt the need of a Heavenly guide, of the love of One whose banners should for ever be over him, whose love should be as a wall of fire about him. Before he lays his head upon his hard pillow he prays, invoking the protection of his Heavenly Father, and casting himself upon his care. He sleeps; but his

soul awakes, and the Lord appears to him in a dream, and promises to be *his* God, as he had been his father's God; and from this day he avouched the Lord to be his God. And many a young man, since, has had occasion to bless God for the influences that accompanied this important period of life. The tenderness of feeling which such an occasion very naturally engenders; the kind sympathies it calls out; the warm and friendly instructions which it solicits; the prayers it calls forth, are especially suited to direct the mind heavenwards. The parting hour is an hour of great *moral power;* hearts are then warm, and the susceptibilities of the soul awake to receive the most kindly impressions; thoughts then speak, and words burn; long cherished relationships are broken up; all are vividly reminded of the instability of all such relationships; are made to feel the uncertainty of the return of the departing one; and very naturally there is at this moment a mutual looking forward to a home beyond the narrow confines of this life, where there are no partings, no adieus, no dissolutions of domestic ties. Eternal things are then almost involuntarily forced upon the attentions of the parties; prayers are sought and pledged, and oftentimes the most salutary and lasting impressions are made.

So it was in the case of young Armstrong. He lived a thoughtless youth till this important epoch of his life. The father's attempts to reach the heart of the son were now for the first time successful. "The first decidedly religious impressions were now made on the mind of the son." These impressions never wore off; after a few months he became the subject of saving grace.

In the preparation of the Memoir, two plans suggested themselves to the mind of the compiler: the first was to *recast* the materials put into his hand from which to construct it, and so

combine the several accounts which appeared at the time, as the better to preserve the unity and order of the thoughts and events therein contained; the other was, to let the writers of those different notices each speak for himself, as he spoke while yet every ear was tingling with the sad reverberations from that doomed vessel, and while that solemn bell was yet tolling the requiem of the departed ones, and anguish and wailing was yet going up from many an afflicted household. I chose the latter method as more consonant, I doubt not, with the feelings of the numerous friends who still retain a vivid recollection of the mournful catastrophe. They would have its events recounted in the *language of the day*, when men spoke with the voice of the Almighty still sounding in their ears. This, we are persuaded, will more than compensate for the lack of order and consistency which we consent to sacrifice.

In reference to the sermons destined to fill up this volume, the only difficulty has been in the *selection*. Few pastors, of the same number of years standing, it is believed, left behind them so many *good* sermons. I do not say *great* sermons in the usual acceptation of the term, but good, practical, evangelical sermons; all so uniformly good as to make a selection difficult. I am, therefore, by no means sure that I have selected the best of the great number put into my hands Those selected will doubtless be pronounced good; and they present a fair and pleasant record of the man, the preacher, and the Christian.

We present this volume to Dr. Armstrong's friends as a memorial of his worth, sure they will accept the offering as a record of one they loved. You loved him as a man, you honored him as a Christian, you revered him as a minister of Christ, and you will love to cherish his memory, to imitate his virtues, and to transmit his character to your children.

Accept, then, this record of your friend and brother in Christ;

peruse it; circulate it; and pray the great Master of the vineyard that he will raise up a succession of such men to adorn the ministry of reconciliation, to favor God's gracious plans of mercy to the heathen, and thus abundantly to light up with a smile the moral desolations of our world.

MEMOIR OF REV. W. J. ARMSTRONG, D.D.

CHAPTER I.

The early life of Armstrong—Memoir by Rev. David Greene.

THOUGH dead the wise and the good man lives; though dumb, he speaks; though absent in the place of graves, he is present with us, and we commune with the soul that is gone. He lives in every truth he promulgated, in every precept he exemplified, in every right principle he inculcated, or which he yet more indelibly impressed on the minds of his cotemporaries by *living acts;* he lives in every right feeling and moral affection which he transmitted to others. The teachings, the character, the virtues of the good man are immortal. Hence the value of all truthfully written biography. If it be a fair picture of the good man, it is an inheritance to posterity worth preserving. If it be a truthful mirror, we cannot suspend it in too conspicuous a place, or look at it too often. But will it be read? We think it will, and we think so because it pays homage to goodness, to moral excellence, to truth, integrity, benevolence, and amiability.

Rare as these virtues are in our apostate world, yet when they are really seen or recorded, as in the case of the subject of this memoir, they are revered. It is the homage which the world pays to virtue.

Few men have shared so largely in the confidence

and affections of all good men as Dr. W. J. Armstrong. He was one of the five excellent Secretaries of the American Board, who in quick succession, and while their sun had scarcely passed the zenith of life, have been called from their arduous and useful labors below to enter upon a higher service, nearer the great King. Such was the man, such the various posts he held in the King's service, such the work he did, and the universal esteem in which he was held, as to seem to accord to him a memorial among the mighty dead. Armstrong was a man of kindred spirit with Worcester, Evarts, Cornelius and Wisner. He had filled the office of Secretary of the Board longer than either of them—eleven years in all. And such, too, was the manner of his death as to give an interest to the details of his life.

A biographical notice, by the Rev. David Greene, co-secretary of the Board with Dr. Armstrong, very happily portrays, in a few pages, the prominent points of the life of the late secretary. We insert this excellent notice without mutilation or amendment, simply adding to it such other notices as appeared at the time of Dr. Armstrong's death, and as we have been able since to collect. We also interpose a few entries in a brief diary which he kept in the early part of his life, and two letters—one from his excellent father—all furnishing a further illustration of his early life.

"WILLIAM JESSUP ARMSTRONG was born on the 20th of October, 1796, at Mendham, New Jersey, where his father, Rev. Amzi Armstrong, D.D., was pastor of the Presbyterian Church. He was the oldest of nine children, of whom six were daughters. His parents consecrated him to God, and early expressed the desire that, following in the footsteps of his father,

he might be qualified for, and in due time enter, the Gospel ministry. Their prayers and councils, and all the arrangements relative to his education, bore on this subject.

"The first years of his life were spent at home, acquiring the common rudiments of an education; in addition to which he had, at the age of thirteen, made such attainments in the Latin and Greek languages as to be qualified to enter college. But for want of maturity and vigor of physical constitution, and probably, also, a desire to retain a youth of such a temperament longer under the Christian watch and guidance of the parental roof, he was placed on a farm, where he spent about five years, anticipating some of his college studies, but dividing his time mainly between manual labor and reading, the former increasing his muscular energy to a somewhat uncommon degree, laying a foundation for that excellent and uninterrupted health which he enjoyed, and contributing undoubtedly to that promptness and tact in every station and employment to which he was called, by which his later years were characterized; and the latter storing his mind with much of that general information on which he drew when subsequently occupied with active public labors.

"In 1814, at eighteen years of age, young Armstrong entered the junior class in the college at Princeton, the venerable Dr. Green being then President. Hitherto he had been a lively, ardent, impetuous youth; and though he must have known the wishes and prayers of his father, and that he was sent to college only with the hope that he might become qualified to preach the Gospel, yet he seems not to have sympathized with him, nor spent much thought on his own spiritual concerns and prospects. As the best method of reaching

his heart, the father, before the object of his hopes was sent from home, addressed a sermon to the youth of his congregation, prepared with special reference to the case of this son. The prayer of the father was heard, and his aim in part accomplished. By that sermon the first decided religious impressions were made on the mind of the son. These impressions, though partially effaced by the novel scenes and excitements of college life, never wore off; and a few months afterwards, during a revival of religion in that institution, young Armstrong indulged the hope of acceptance with God. This revival, it is understood, gave occasion for the tract, by Dr. Green, entitled 'Questions and Counsels,' which has since been so extensively useful in times of religious awakening."

Fain would we know more of this interesting portion of young Armstrong's life. A youth of eighteen years, he consecrates himself to his God. Here he lays the foundation of that sterling Christian character which so well adorned his after life. How was this character formed, under what guidance, by what helps, through what instructions? We trace in the formation of such a character the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and the counsels of the inspired word. And we may distinctly trace, too, the "Questions and Counsels" and teachings of that time-honored servant of Christ (lately fallen asleep) who then presided over Nassau Hall. Were we to judge of the thoroughness and depth of that work of grace from Dr. Green's carefully drawn up statement, in the shape of a report to the trustees of the college, we should expect its converts would prove such men as Armstrong and Bishop McIlvine, and others of blessed memory, who were its subjects. Yet we are not without another ray of light here. Though Dr. Armstrong was not in the practice of keeping a journal, yet a few

entries in the early part of his Christian experience give no doubtful intimation of the kind of Christian character which he then began to form. We shall there discover the germ, the elements of that meek, self-denying, energetic religion, which so beautifully characterized his after life. Though they are the breathings of the new-born soul, the fresh aspirations of the bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoicing as a strong man to run a race, yet we discern in them the elements of that character which afterwards so adorned the man, and blessed the church.

Occasionally during the year 1815, the year after the date of the commencement of his religious life, he noted down his religious exercises. We find expressions like these :—

"Oh, for increasing grace! Oh, for the Holy Spirit to warm and animate my cold and insensible heart, and to revive my weak and dying grace! How good is God! Praise him all my soul—all that is within me. Praise his holy name for all his mercies unto me. What precious privileges have I this day enjoyed. Dr. G. preached from Eph. ii. 14, 'He is our peace.' A powerful sermon, and I humbly hope not quite useless to my dying, immortal soul. How little have I lived to Him who died for me. How much sin have I committed; how much that I might have done have I left undone! Gracious Saviour, quicken me by the sanctifying influence of Thy holy spirit, so that I may live more to Thy glory. Subdue these lusts which war against my soul. Rule in me, and reign over me. Be my prophet, priest, and king; be my wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Oh, give me a spirit of earnest, humble, and fervent prayer. Give me the temper of a little child. Make me meek and lowly, make me, if it please thee, an humble instrument in Thy hands of

doing much good in my day and generation. True, Lord, I am unworthy, but Thou art merciful. Thy sacrifice is sufficient. In that world, I place all my hopes. To Thy cross would I nail all my corruptions. By it would I rise to dwell for ever in Thy presence.

"Truly the Lord is good to me, though I am ungrateful. Oh, that His mercies might lead me to repentance—that His suffering, His dying love might sweetly constrain me to love Him with my whole heart, and to serve Him with a perfect service. Blessed, precious, lovely, dying Saviour, take me! take me, oh, take me, with all that I have and am; renew and sanctify me, make my polluted soul a fit temple for Thy holy spirit to dwell in. Give me a spirit of prayer; grant communion and fellowship with Thyself. May I live near to Thee—may I walk with God.

"How little I have profited by the privileges of this day. Lord, call me not to an account in justice as Thou mightest do for misimprovement. Look in mercy on me through the mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ. For his sake have mercy on me and bless me. Create in me a new heart, and renew in me a right spirit. Guide me in the path of wisdom; make me wholly Thine. May I live in Thy fear and to Thy glory. Thou knowest my heart—lead me in Thine own way. Bless to me the opportunity of hearing Thy word this evening.

"Again the light of that blessed morning that saw the Lord arise has greeted my opening eyes. But how cold has it found me. How little prospect of a blessing on this day unless God, for his own mercy's sake, interpose. My heart is cold as the ice, and harder than the nether mill-stone. How dead and cold were my secret prayers this morning. Oh, blessed sun of righteousness, shine upon me, and warm and animate my cold

and lifeless affections. I do long for Thy salvation. I do earnestly long for Thy presence, and to enjoy the sweets of communion with thee. I deserve them not, but Thou hast said I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. Call me—draw me sweetly to thee by the sweetly constraining influences of the blessed Spirit. Oh, for a sight of my blessed Jesus—for one of his seraphic smiles, to give me, even in this world of sin and sorrow, a precious foretaste of those joys which angels and the spirits of just men made perfect, have, while they cast their sorrows at His feet,—and in loudest symphony tune their golden harps to the praises of the Lamb that was slain from the foundation of the world.

"This day I have made a solemn resolution in the presence of God, and, in His strength, I humbly hope never again so to yield myself to temptation as to indulge in my most easily besetting sin. I most fervently pray that he would keep me from it by his grace, and grant, for Jesus' sake, that I may serve him in holiness all the days of his life.—W. J. A. [Broken]—God be merciful to me a sinner.—W. J. A."

In the breathings of this new-born soul, we meet the earnest pleadings for greater measures of grace—deep searchings of heart—the self-renouncing, self-denying spirit—an honest self-examination, and an earnest desire that he may at once enter the service of his new Master: "Quicken me by the influence of Thy Spirit—rule in me and over me. Oh, give me a spirit of earnest, humble, fervent prayer. Give me the temper of a little child. Make me meek and lowly; and if it please thee, make me an humble instrument in Thy hands of doing much good in my day and generation." Nor were these aspirations after holiness, these hungerings and thirstings for greater supplies of grace,

this ardent desire to *be* good and to *do* good, in vain. They were incipient motions of that spiritual life which was so richly developed in after manhood. They reveal the source of that life, and the means by which it is watched over and cherished, and brought to maturity. Piety is a delicate germ, planted by the hand of the ever blessed Spirit, yet, unless it be cherished by the kindly influence of prayer, and fed by the bread of life, and rooted in the soul by meditation on the Divine Word, and watered from the wells of salvation—unless the genial sun shine upon it, and the breath of Heaven breathe upon it, it will wither and bring forth no fruit.

Such was not the religion of the lamented Armstrong. His religion was a full, flowing, fertilizing stream, gathering strength and depth and momentum at every step of its progress; becoming broader, purer, more fertilizing as it gently descended into the ocean of eternal bliss. It was the river of life flowing out from the throne of God, and after meandering in delightful luxuriance amidst the moral desolations of this fallen world, dispensing untold blessings in its course, it returned to the exhaustless fountain from which it sprung. Be it our delightful task to start from these small, yet not insignificant, beginnings, and to follow down this living stream, marking well the deserts it has made glad, and the solitary places it has made to blossom as the rose.

The following letter reveals a secret in the formation of Dr. Armstrong's character. Never was parental instruction better given or more honestly and profitably appropriated. Though the letter gives us but a single glance at the parental and ministerial character of the father, it is enough to indicate the rich patrimony which fell to the lot of the son. He evidently "divided his living" with a son, who played not the

prodigal, but suitably used the goods that fell to him from a worthy father. But we will let the letter speak for itself.

Letter addressed to Wm. J. Armstrong by his father, Rev. Amzi Armstrong.

"Mendham, 20th Feb. 1815.

"MY DEAR SON:

"Yours of the 10th inst. came in due time by the mail. Never before did you give me such pleasure and comfort as when you asked counsel of me, to help you in the service of the Lord Christ, and concerning the way of life. It is of immense importance to you that the present precious opportunity you enjoy should be used to acquire a fixed and settled taste and decided predilection for your Lord's service, and for the moral principles, and the holy doctrines of His word. Cultivate, therefore, I beseech you, a spirit of meek and dutiful obedience to his will, and firm and unwavering reliance upon his word and promise. I hope the spirit of grace has wrought in your heart that full persuasion which has given you a more complete and joyful assurance that Jesus is the Christ, and that all the promises of God are in him, yea, and in him amen, than you ever had of any other truth or position whatever. This is the rock on which the church is builded, and the foundation—the cornerstone of all our hopes.

"Strive to have this conviction deeply inwrought into all the sentiments and feelings of your heart. This you cannot accomplish by any artful contrivances or stratagems; but only by maintaining a meek and dutiful temper, and strengthening the conviction by prayerful reading and meditation in the Divine Word. That word is the great charter of your Christian hopes,

and must be your guide in the path of life, and, therefore, your best security will be an intimate and pious acquaintance with it.

"Whether written obligations, as you mentioned in your last, would be useful in your case, I am at a loss to judge. My opinion has been, that for persons naturally of a phlegmatic, unyielding temper they may be useful. But for those of a more pliant and generous native temper, it is better that they accustom themselves to frequent repeated acts of consecration in prayer and worship addressed immediately to their Lord, continually referring in their thoughts and feelings to those highest bonds, and most solemn obligations that are written and sealed in the blood of Christ. In every case there is danger, I suppose: the execution of such written obligations as, I think, Dr. Doddrige proposes, may lead to a legal and self-righteous spirit in relying, if not on our own doings, yet on our purposes of doing, and in holding ourselves bound, by our own act, rather than by those everlasting and most solemn obligations which we owe to God in Christ.

"I think it would be better for you if you could habituate yourself to a cheerful and entire trust, committing yourself and all your interests and concerns to God in Christ, and being anxious only to obey his will and do his service. Your self-examinations, then, would turn not on the question 'Am I safe?' but on this rather, 'Do I reverence and love my Lord and Master, and am I obedient to His holy will and pleasure?' And if, at any time, fears and doubts beset you hard, look into the pages of His sacred Word for a refreshing of your faith in that Divine truth, which is the source of light and peace. And continue to look there, with prayer and supplication, and turn not to any other expedient, till the spirit of grace revive that

persuasion which so fills and satisfies the mind as to leave no wish or desire unsatisfied, but this, that you may serve and please the Lord. Be assured that nothing short of this persuasion of the truth as it is in Jesus will ever fill your heart with the true joy and peace of the believer, and without this persuasion all other sources of joy and consolation must fail you. Your Christianity is no better than deism if this be not the chief and leading axiom in it, that Jesus is the Christ; and it is only by a direct view of faith, beholding the Lamb of God, that the power of sin in us, and over us, is effectually broken. If you lose sight of this object, you will be involved in darkness. And, remember, God requires of you the exercise of your moral faculties, and your rational nature, in *habits* of believing, and extended views of the precious truth, to supply, in a measure, the place and office of those vivid apprehensions which are the more immediate work of the spirit of grace, and which you are not to expect will be always continually supplied to you in your state of trial; else there would be no trial. If you be indeed a Christian, it is your *faith* that is to be tried, that your temper may be mended. You are not to be guided or measured by men, nor to rely on comparing yourself with yourself, but your rule of faith and the foundation and support of your hope, are to be taken only from the sacred Scriptures.

"Your very affectionate father,

"AMZI ARMSTRONG."

The lines which follow, the effusions of his youthful heart and untried muse, give us a further intimation as to where young Armstrong gathered the elements of that healthful, Bible character, which unfolded in such ripeness in after years. The means by which these

stanzas were preserved, and the source from which they came into the hands of the compiler, give them some additional interest. There still lives in this place an aged woman, now humbled and debased, who well knew the Armstrong family when William was a boy. Either from repetition, or otherwise, she had received these lines, and committed them to her memory. And there, after more than thirty years, was found the only copy known to be in existence. The following facsimile was taken, verbally, from its original plate and transferred to paper:—

THE BIBLE.

The Bible, man's best friend on earth,
Friend, indeed, of Heavenly birth,
Precious gift of God to man,
Who Thy excellence can scan?

In this vale, where sorrows spring,
Thou canst make the mourner sing;
In this land of darkest night,
Thou canst cheer with heavenly light.

When the heart corrodes with care,
Sweet Thy consolations are;
When the anguished spirit dies,
Springs of life are Thy supplies.

In the hour of ardent youth,
May I love Thy sacred truth;
May it all my actions guide,
May it check my passions' tide.

When advancing on life's stage,
I arrive at middle age,
Be thou still my chosen friend,
All my footsteps to attend.

May I never, never stray,
From that calm and peaceful way,
Over life's tempestuous sea,
Pointed out alone by Thee.

When I hear the billows roar,
As they dash against that shore
Whither all are tending fast,
At which all must end at last:

As a beacon shed Thy light,
O'er the waves, dispel the night,
Cheer the darkness, cheer the gloom,
Thickening awful o'er the tomb.

Light me to that blissful port,
Where my Saviour holds his court;
Then I'll chant Thy praises high,
There my joys will never die.

In this connection, the following letter will be read with interest; it is the voice of a much respected friend. Not only does it come as a timely and faithful messenger, to serve our present purpose, but to many it will be received as a precious record of by-gone scenes of peculiar interest. That precious revival was the beginning of spiritual life to some of the brightest ornaments of the American church. Armstrong, McIlvaine, Daniel Baker, Byington, and Governor McDowell, of Virginia, were the subjects of it. It was truly a fountain from which flowed forth many a copious stream that has carried beauty and fertility through as many desert fields.

"Belvidere, N. J., Aug. 5th, 1851.

"MR. A. MERWIN.

"My dear Sir,—As you have desired from me any information that I may possess relative to the important change in the moral character of that devoted servant of God, I hasten to communicate such knowledge as I possess touching the *single* point of his conversion. At the time of this remarkable outpouring of God's spirit, I was a member of the senior class, and certain events that transpired then have left an indelible impression

on my mind. At this period, and how many years prior I know not, an evening prayer meeting was carefully observed by the few pious students of the college. The hour for that meeting was announced by the bell, intimating to the students that the time had arrived when each was expected to retire to his room for the night.

"These were precious meetings for praise and prayer, and as my room was central in its position, it was the place for assembling during most of the two years that I remained in Princeton. There were students at this time connected with the college, who by their riotous and insubordinate conduct had caused the faculty much trouble. Daniel Baker, a beloved classmate and most intimate friend (now Dr. Baker, signally blessed in his labors as a pastor and missionary), in one of our walks, proposed that we should make a special effort for the conversion of our fellow students. It happened that we were members of the different literary societies connected with the college. He a Whig and myself a Clio. The spirit of rivalry between these societies was such that there was but little social intercourse among the students, excepting as Whigs associated with Whigs, and Clios with their fellows. The simple plan proposed was for each to select some one of our unconverted friends, and having made them the subject of special prayer, affectionately and earnestly to direct their immediate attention to the subject of personal religion; and to report whatever of an interesting nature might occur. I have always felt, in looking back to this subject, that God put this thought and desire in Brother Baker's heart, and that this, however small, was the beginning of that work of grace which issued, under the appropriate means, in the conversion of so many men who have honored God in the ministry,

and in the other professions which they have so usefully sustained. The first person that I took occasion to converse with was a Mr. Newbold, of Philadelphia, a member of the junior class. He was a young man, amiable, of a correct deportment and universally respected. As a scholar, he stood at the head of his class. I never shall forget the tenderness of feeling that he manifested, and the warm embrace with which he drew me to his bosom. He literally took me up in his arms, and said that he had thought *often* and *much* on the subject of his soul's salvation, and expressed a determination to delay the matter no longer. He said he had often felt a wish to attend the prayer meeting, but feared he might intrude. That night he was present, and shortly after gave evidence of decided piety. Through his agency the first Sabbath school was organized in Princeton, which I think, indeed, was the first established in New Jersey. It was his purpose to have preached the Gospel, in connection with the Episcopal Church; but he was called to serve God in his upper temple. The second person that I ventured to address was William J. Armstrong. I knew him to be the son of a distinguished and devoted minister of the Gospel, and of course the subject of many prayers. Mr. A. had been connected with the college but a short time, but sufficiently long to make it known that he was a man of mind, and a scholar of the first order. He was full of life and good humor; I think in no way immoral, but manifesting no interest on the subject of religion. I met in this case, also, a very cordial reception. I do not remember even the substance of our conversation; but this I recollect, that he formed the solemn purpose to give his heart to God, and that I believe was the beginning of that obedience and devotedness to God's

service which characterized his subsequent life. Brother Baker, I think, invariably met with a similar reception, and soon a goodly number attended our evening meeting for prayer; indeed after a few weeks our room could not contain them, and it was a most interesting sight at last to behold the whole college, with perhaps a few exceptions, on their knees in social prayer. Dr. Greene labored abundantly in the work, and had the efficient aid of the professors in the Theological Seminary. Mr. A. communicated the state of his mind to his father, and about the time he began to indulge a hope of an interest in Christ, he received and read to us a most affecting letter from his father, in which he stated that he and his mother had just risen from prayer, where they had wrestled with the angel of the covenant that he might be made the subject of the renewing grace of God.

"About thirty-five years have passed since these events transpired. I am not able to recall any striking incidents relative to his conversion.

"I am aware that I have not communicated much of interest to you or to his family.

"Yours, &c.,

"EDWARD ALLEN."

From this period, the inclination and purpose of the son were in unison with the desires and plans of the father. He selected the ministry as his profession, and turned his thoughts and studies in that direction. And it is an interesting and well-authenticated fact, that at this early period, his mind was much interested in the foreign missionary work, and he seriously contemplated devoting himself to it. In the spring of 1815, either at Princeton or Mendham, probably the latter, he made a profession of his faith in Christ. In

1816, he completed his college course, with a respectable standing as a scholar, and soon after returned to his father, who then had charge of a large and flourishing academy in Bloomfield. Placing himself under the care of the Presbytery, as a candidate for the ministry, he immediately commenced the study of theology, under the direction of his father, in whose school he also rendered assistance as a teacher. Occasionally he submitted himself for examination to the late Dr. Richards, then pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Newark, and subsequently professor of theology in the Auburn seminary.

After two years spent in this manner, he was licensed to preach the gospel, but instead of entering fully upon the public labors of the ministry, he repaired to Princeton, where he continued a year, enjoying the greater advantages for prosecuting his studies, furnished by the theological seminary in that place. That love for preaching which characterized him through life, led him gladly to avail himself of opportunities, on the Sabbath and at other times, of publishing God's message of salvation, and beseeching men to become reconciled to him.

Having thus gone through a thorough course of training for the gospel ministry, he was ready to enter upon the work; and his characteristic ardor and fearlessness of toil and exposure seem to have led him at the outset to make his way into the most untried and least promising field, and where most difficulties were to be encountered. He did not inquire for a good ministerial people, a well organized, well instructed, and orderly church, where he might have a comfortable home, with little more left for him to do than to carry forward things as he found them. He wished not to build on another man's foundation, but to preach the

gospel in regions beyond, and not to boast in another man's line of things made ready to his hand. His inquiry seems to have been, Where are men most in want of the instructions and the saving influences of the gospel? Animated by this spirit, he was commissioned by the General Assembly's Board of Missions to proceed to Albemarle county, in the central part of Virginia. Furnished by his father with a horse and travelling equipments, he proceeded to his appointed field. Here he spent two years, laboring principally in Charlottesville and its vicinity, near the residence of the late President Jefferson, and where has since been established the University of Virginia. Infidelity and irreligion greatly prevailed. No church, it is stated, had ever been organized there; and the Lord's Supper had never been administered. The young missionary, with his ardor and singleness of aim, with the uncommon amiableness of his character and the peculiar pathos of his eloquence, could not but command attention in such a place. Marked success attended his labors. A number of interesting cases of conversion occurred among infidels. A Presbyterian church was gathered, which still exists, and the face of society was much changed for the better. It is said that Mr. Jefferson, who could not be expected fully to sympathize with the preacher, or appreciate him as an ambassador of Christ, and who yet seems to have been impressed with the great influence he was exerting, remarked, on hearing that some of his infidel friends had become members of the newly organized Christian church, that the preacher who had thus wrought upon them was "more of a knave than a fool."

The labors of Mr. Armstrong in this interesting field were soon interrupted; but not until he had in a good measure fulfilled the mission for which he was so pe-

culiarly qualified. The declining health of his father recalled him to New Jersey in 1821. On his arrival, he found Bloomfield favored with an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Into this work he entered with his whole heart, in connection with the pastor of the church, the Rev. G. N. Judd. His labors were also highly acceptable; and as he became known, a number of churches were desirous of obtaining him as their pastor. He accepted the unanimous invitation of the First Presbyterian Church in Trenton, and labored there with fidelity and success nearly three years.

In the spring of 1824, the late Dr. John H. Rice having left the First Presbyterian Church in Richmond, Virginia, and entered upon a professorship in the Union Theological Seminary, recommended Mr. Armstrong to that church as his successor in the pastoral office. The invitation was given, and was so earnestly pressed upon him by their late pastor, who was well acquainted with his acceptable and useful labors in Albemarle, that he thought it his duty to accept it. For ten years he was the laborious, beloved, and successful pastor of that church, during which period his labors were extended over a wide circle around, and his Christian influence was steadily increasing through the State.

There is ample evidence that in all departments of labor as a pastor he was diligent, successful, and highly esteemed. One who resided near him while at Trenton, and afterwards followed him in the pastoral office there, bears the following testimony:

"While he was at Trenton, I often listened to his sermons, and there was no man, whom, at that day, I heard with more impression. His discourses were carefully prepared, and were pronounced with a degree of

warmth and emotion, which are quite unusual. While his intonations were far from being rhetorically perfect, the general result of so much truth, uttered with so much energy, could not fail to be an awakening of the hearer's mind. My recollection is vivid of his appeals to the heart, as being of a high order. He was often greatly moved himself, and was heard by numbers, I doubt not, to their everlasting good.

"When, at a later period, I was called to labor among the same people, I found that he had left that good name, which is 'better than precious ointment.' There were manifest tokens of his faithfulness, in public and in private.

"Still later, I enjoyed his hospitality, and shared his labors in Virginia, where we both were settled. The same characteristic seriousness and zeal here prevailed in his ministrations; and I suppose his labors were much increased. In various parts of the State, I have heard of him, and always in a way which was most honorable to his Christian qualities. No man of my acquaintance seemed to me more simply bent on doing good, and reaching the profound convictions of his hearers. In my humble judgment, Dr. Armstrong was a felicitous sermonizer. His discourses abounded in what I may be allowed to call *fervid argument*. They were often elaborate, always judicious, always unpretending, and sometimes highly pathetic. Intense feeling took the place of art, and covered a multitude of minor blemishes. As a private Christian, our lamented friend was above reproach. I never saw him for an instant frivolous, or for an instant sour. His very countenance told of affectionate seriousness. There was at times a beseeching earnestness in his look, which will be remembered by his friends."

Another, who sat under his ministry during the ten years of his settlement in Richmond, writes:

"Dr. Armstrong was blessed with a strong mind and vigorous body, and was capable of more mental and physical labor than most men, which he never hesitated to tax to the utmost whenever the cause of Christ called for it. I have often, since his removal from us, made something like an estimate of his labors here; and I am within bounds when I say, that during the ten years which he spent with us, he must have delivered weekly from three to four regular sermons, two or three lectures, besides funeral and occasional sermons, and at the same time taught three large and interesting Bible classes. He was a warm, active, and efficient friend of all our religious and benevolent institutions, which were greatly indebted to his ardent feelings and uncommon business talents for their prosperity and success.

"As a preacher, Dr. Armstrong had few equals. He possessed a sound and discriminating mind, a warm heart, and he seemed to throw his whole soul into the subject upon which he was speaking, and constrained the hearer to feel that he believed and felt the truths which he uttered. As the teacher of a Bible class, he excelled. His explanations were clear, simple, and forcible. His readiness to meet every objection, and solve every difficulty, showed clearly that the Bible was a familiar book, while the variety, beauty, and propriety of his illustrations proved the extent and value of his general reading. Few, very few, who entered his Bible class, strangers to the power of the gospel, long continued to resist its claims, as they were pressed upon them by their beloved teacher.

"As a pastor, he was untiring in his efforts for the good of those placed under his care. He neglected

none; but his special attention was bestowed upon the humblest, weakest, and most afflicted of his flock. He could 'rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep;' and many now in heaven, and many who are still on earth, can testify that he had a heart to sympathize with them in their afflictions, and soothe their sorrows by his counsel and prayers. The first two years of our departed brother's labors here, seemed to be without fruit, and he began to despond, and doubt whether the Lord had called him to this field; but, to use his own favorite expression, 'he encouraged himself in the Lord his God,' and labored and prayed the more earnestly, and soon the Lord granted the desires of his heart in a powerful revival of religion. After a few weeks, seventy persons were received into the church on one Sabbath. Three interesting revivals of religion were enjoyed under his ministry here, in which between two and three hundred persons were hopefully converted. Our house of worship becoming too small to accommodate the congregation, he was greatly instrumental in the erection of a large and convenient one, in which he preached for several years to an interesting church and congregation; and when he was finally called from us to take charge of the foreign mission cause, he enjoyed the confidence and affection of his people to as great an extent as at any previous period. It would be injustice to him to confine the results of his labors to his particular church and congregation. This whole region of country felt the influence of his labors; and there are but few neighborhoods in Eastern Virginia where there are not to be found some fruits of his labors.

"As a man and a Christian, he was kind, conciliating, and humble; but where principle was involved, he was firm as a rock. He was naturally a man of ardent temperament and warm feelings; but his judgment and

heart were brought so fully under the power and influence of divine grace, that in some very trying circumstances he has been known to bear injury and provocation with the spirit of his Master. He was also remarkable for the transparency of his character; his freedom from guile and management were uncommon. In pecuniary matters he was scrupulously particular. I never knew him contract an obligation which he did not sacredly meet; indeed, he regarded this as essential to ministerial reputation and usefulness. His style of living was very plain; and although his salary was not large, his expenses were always brought within it, and I was often astonished to see his liberality to religious and benevolent objects, not supposing that he had the means of giving as he did."

Another still, who had the best opportunity for knowing his habits and labors, says:

"He loved to kneel beside the sick, and attend the dying believer to the gates of heaven. How many have welcomed him, who were fitted, through his instrumentality, for that blessed abode! During the revival in 1828, he preached from five to nine times a week, praying with the anxious sinner, and rejoicing with the young convert. Almost every individual composing his Bible classes united with the church. His sermons were written while others slept. During the sickly season of the year, when others retreated to the country, he usually remained in Richmond, attending to the poor, preaching at their houses when deaths occurred. Many of the ignorant were thus led to the sanctuary. The widow and the orphan shared largely in his sympathies. He thought it important to set before his flock an example of Christian simplicity in all things, and to

live plainly, in order to contribute largely to the treasury of the Lord."

During his residence in Richmond, in addition to his abundant labors among his own people, he was eminently a public man, one who was deeply interested in, and ready to labor for, all objects adapted to promote the kingdom of Christ and the welfare of men, and one to whom such interests were confided. He was Secretary of the Home Missionary Society of his Presbytery, Trustee of the Union Theological Seminary, Manager in Temperance, Sabbath School, Colonization, and other societies; regularly attended and took a large share in transacting the business of his Presbytery and Synod, and aided his brethren in special religious meetings. In everything where responsibility was devolved upon him, he aimed to meet it, and faithfully perform the duties expected of him.

During this period also, that special interest in missions to the heathen, which manifested itself in college soon after his conversion, was more fully developed. 'He prayed much for the success of missions; uniformly spent a due portion of time in preparing for the monthly concert of prayer; was an example of liberality in his contributions, so much so as to surprise those acquainted with his limited resources; endeavored to awaken, extend, and foster a missionary spirit among his people, and had the satisfaction of seeing a number of his spiritual children go to the heathen. He early became known as one who might be relied on to exert a missionary influence in that part of the country, and was repeatedly invited to engage in agencies for that purpose. But the time when his whole soul seemed to be peculiarly moved for the heathen, and he was, as it were, newly baptized with the missionary spirit, was at the meetings for prayer for the conversion of the world,

held on the first Monday in January, 1833. Standing among the ministers, and before the assembled churches of Richmond, with a countenance glowing with love, he said, "My brethren, I am ashamed that there are so many of us here in this Christian land. We must go to the heathen." "That day of prayer," says one who was present, "made an impression on many hearts which was deep and lasting." This was doubtless the way in which God was preparing him to perform the labors to which he was soon to be called in connection with the foreign missionary work. At the meeting of the East Hanover Presbytery, to which he belonged, held in the following spring, a resolution was introduced and unanimously adopted, expressing the conviction that the southern Presbyterian churches were imperiously called upon to engage more systematically and vigorously in the work of missions to the heathen, and appointing Mr. Armstrong and the Rev. W. S. Plumer a committee to bring the subject before the Synod of Virginia, which was to meet in the following October. By invitation Dr. Wisner, one of the secretaries of the American Board, attended the meeting of the Synod. The result was that a series of resolutions, with a constitution, was adopted with perfect unanimity, and an organization begun, which was designed to embrace the friends of missions within the three Synods of Virginia, North Carolina, and the Chesapeake; and Mr. Armstrong, with others, was appointed to attend the meetings of the two latter synods, and aid in completing the organization, which assumed the name of the Central Board of Foreign Missions. This he did. The Synod of North Carolina acted with the same unanimity. The Synod of the Chesapeake failed of having a meeting. At the first meeting of the Central Board, in March, 1834, all eyes were turned towards Mr. Armstrong as the

principal executive officer of the new society, and he was accordingly, with the hearty concurrence of all, elected its Secretary. During the meeting the following resolutions were introduced and unanimously adopted, after addresses by Mr. Armstrong and others:

"*Resolved*, That this Board acknowledge, in its full force, the obligations of every member of the visible church to live for the conversion of the world.

"*Resolved*, That all the steps by which this Board has been brought into existence, and to its present organized state, manifest the kind and special guidance and interposition of the God of missions, and call upon us for a solemn expression of fervent gratitude.

"*Resolved*, That one of the cheering indications of Providence respecting our southern Zion is the fact, that a considerable proportion of our candidates for the ministry have either determined to become foreign missionaries, or are seriously considering the claims of the hundreds of millions of our unevangelized fellow-men.

"*Resolved*, That, after we have done all that man can do, our whole reliance for success is upon the presence and grace of the Holy Ghost; and that, therefore, the necessity and duty of unceasing prayer for help from God are most manifest."

The whole of this movement seems to be traceable to that special effusion of the Holy Spirit upon our departed brother, in the united meeting of the Richmond churches on the first Monday in January, 1838.

From this date a new era in the life of Mr. Armstrong commenced. He was to leave a harmonious and affectionate people, with whom he never stood better than at that time; sunder all the ties of the pastoral

relation, the tenderness of which none but the faithful Christian pastor knows; sacrifice, to a great extent, his study, the endearments of home, and the quiet and comforts of a settled life. And what was he to receive in return? No honor, no enjoyment—except such as are to be had in making greater sacrifices, performing more self-denying labor, and encountering various perils for the glory of Christ and the salvation of men. And to his mind these were enough to compensate for all which he relinquished. He shrunk not from the sacrifice, though peculiarly painful to one of his affectionate and sympathizing temperament. And his church, knowing him too well to question his motives, and in a good measure imbued with the same spirit, with a noble Christian generosity, though with bleeding hearts, gave up their beloved pastor, out of a stronger love to Christ and his cause. Mr. Armstrong often said that such a trial he hoped never to be called to again. No man valued the quiet of home and the endearments of the family relation more than he. Yet all this did he sacrifice; and, says his surviving partner, "he would doubtless have laid down his life, if he could thereby have awakened the people of God to prayer and effort for a dying world." His connection with his people was dissolved on the 6th of May.

According to an understanding with the newly organized society, Mr. Armstrong was immediately afterwards appointed the General Agent of the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions for the States of Virginia and North Carolina, and entered on his arduous labors about the first of June, 1834. His agency was to cover more than one hundred thousand square miles of territory, embracing about two hundred and fifty churches, most of which had never been formally addressed in relation to foreign missions, nor

had they, to any considerable extent, ever contributed to that object. Writing of this new field of labor, he says, "I fully believe that the salvation of our southern churches depends upon our engaging thoroughly and cordially in foreign missions, and seeking in good earnest the salvation of the perishing heathen among ourselves." His journeyings, his multiplied sermons and addresses, his extended correspondence, and his unwearied efforts in all appropriate ways to accomplish the objects of his agency, were such as the sentiments just quoted, added to his desire for the conversion of the world, might be expected to inspire. He was everywhere most cordially received; much interest was awakened; and the contributions through that Board, within fourteen months after he commenced his work, increased to about ten thousand dollars.

After the decease of the Rev. Dr. Wisner, in February, 1834, Mr. Armstrong was almost immediately looked to as a suitable person to fill the vacancy, and was early consulted on the subject; and at the annual meeting of the Board in the following September, he was elected one of its secretaries for correspondence. With much self-distrust on his part, and regret at relinquishing the work upon which he had entered so prosperously, and in which he had become deeply interested; and with great reluctance on the part of the ministers and churches in that quarter, he accepted the appointment, and removed to Boston in November. His department of labor was the home correspondence, including the superintendence of the agencies. Incited by the same peculiar zeal in the missionary work which characterized him while a pastor and carried him through his agency, he devoted himself to his new duties with exemplary diligence and activity. He remained in Boston about two years and a half, until

April, 1838, when, in compliance with the advice of the Prudential Committee, he removed with his family to the city of New York, expecting to remain there for only a short period; but the importance which was attached to his labors in that city, together with some considerations drawn from the health of his family, prolonged his residence there, with the approbation of the Prudential Committee, till his decease, though with a considerable modification of his official duties. His relations with the Committee, however, and his associates in office, and his familiar acquaintance with the business and affairs of the Board, were maintained by a constant correspondence and attending once a month on their meetings.

Both while in Boston and New York, he was most fully and usefully employed in his official labors. Nearly every Sabbath found him in the pulpit presenting, with solemnity and earnestness, and with a peculiar pathos, the claims of Christ and of the heathen nations; though it was his delight, when opportunities favored, to become, as it were, a pastor again, and plead with men in behalf of their own souls. Especially, after his removal to New York, was his missionary preaching extended through a wide circle. Not only in that city, but in other churches of the State and of the adjacent States, which the time demanded by his other duties would permit him to reach, did he press upon the friends of Christ the work of the world's conversion. In this respect he performed fully the duties of an ordinary preaching agent. Meetings of auxiliary societies and ecclesiastical bodies, together with conventions held for prayer, statements and discussions on missionary subjects, called him to travel extensively, to address public bodies, confer with a great number of individuals, ministers and others, and thus to become

personally known very widely, and to exert a great and salutary influence in favor of the missionary cause. Everywhere his visits, and his statements, and appeals were acceptable. All the friends of Christ loved to commune with such a man on such a subject. There was no controversy, no partizanship, no denunciation, no severity. The understanding was enlightened and convinced; the best feelings of the heart were stirred; and there was a heavenly, New-Testament savor in his spirit and in all his communications on these subjects, which in all places secured Christian confidence and cheerful co-operation.

Mr. Armstrong's correspondence, especially within the bounds of the Presbyterian Church, was very extensive, all of it bearing on the same great work, and pervaded by the same heavenly spirit as his preaching and other public labors; and the influence which he exerted by means of it was wide-spread and great.

To those most intimately associated with him in labor, both in Boston and New York, he was truly a faithful Christian brother, sympathizing with them in all their perplexities and trials; endeavoring to alleviate their burdens; bearing with them, counselling them, and praying for them; never tenacious of his rights, and always scrupulously careful not to wound their feelings. A pleasanter man to co-operate with they could not desire. The benevolent, affectionate interest he manifested in them, and the frankness and loveliness of his demeanor in his social intercourse and in transacting business with them,—while the impression can never be effaced from their memories,—no language of theirs can adequately describe.

But no wide sphere of usefulness; not his own delight in the work in which he was engaged; not the love and respect which wife and children, and associates

in labor, and the friends of Christ generally, cherished for him, could retain him with us, when his Master's time for removing him from this vineyard had come. Our departed brother left New York on Monday, the 23d of November, to make his monthly visit to Boston and attend the meeting of the Prudential Committee. He arrived safely the next morning, and spent that day and till the afternoon of the following in perusing communications from the missions, attending the meeting of the Committee, and conferring with his associates, as he was accustomed to do. On the twenty-fifth, the day of his contemplated return to New York, a storm set in with great violence. Repeatedly during the day his associates remarked to him that he ought not to venture upon the water in such a tempest; but not feeling quite well, and strongly desirous to return to his family and spend with them the annual thanksgiving which was to be on the next day, he seemed decided on going, and replied that he had often found that when it was stormy in Boston, it was comparatively calm on Long Island Sound. At five o'clock in the afternoon of Wednesday, he started from Boston, taking the railroad to Norwich and Allyn's Point, where he embarked in the Atlantic and proceeded to New London, which place the steamer left, after some detention, between twelve and one o'clock on the morning of Thursday, November 26. When about nine miles out of the harbor, the steam-pipe burst, rendering the engine useless; and immediately after, the wind, which had blown from the northeast, changed to the northwest, and increased in violence. The anchors were thrown out, the decks were cleared, and other measures taken to lighten the vessel and cause it to ride easier amid the terrific raging of the elements. But all was in vain; the anchors were dragged, and the wreck continued to

drift towards the leeward shore, the waves continually breaking over it.

Soon after the accident to the machinery the fires were extinguished, and from that time the passengers suffered greatly from cold and wet, as well as from painful forebodings of the issue. This state of things continued till after four o'clock on the morning of November 27; and though God was riding on that storm, and a number of those whom he loved were tossed in that wreck, and no human arm could interpose to save, yet the fury of the tempest was not abated, till it had accomplished its work of destruction, and the fragments of the steamer and the lifeless bodies of many of its company were strewed along the shore. Our friend was among the dead. But it was no mere chance that involved him in those perils. God had wisely and mercifully placed him there. Survivors inform us that he was conspicuous among the passengers throughout the day and evening of Thursday, as a minister of Christ, addressing to his companions in danger appropriate religious instruction and consolation, and commending them to God in prayer. On the afternoon of that day, especially, he with about fifty of the passengers assembled in the cabin for prayer and reading of the Scriptures and exhortation.

During the whole scene he was perfectly calm, but solemn and thoughtful; eternity seemed to be opening before him. Himself and all around him—how many of them unprepared he could not know—were standing on its brink. For them he was unutterably solicitous; and for his own last conflict he was gathering strength in God. Some, seeing the dread crisis rapidly approaching, drew near and stood by his side, "because," as one remarked, "it seemed safer to be near so good a man." Just before the wreck broke upon the reef, and the

falling deck and the overwhelming waves swept him lifeless into the sea, he said to one, "I hope we may be allowed, if God will, to reach the shore with our lives; but if not, I have perfect confidence in the wisdom and goodness of Him who doeth all things well." This was his dying testimony to the goodness of God and his own faith in him. The vital spark was probably extinguished instantly by the falling timbers. The same expression of calm confidence in God remained enstamped on his features in death, significant, undoubtedly, of that heavenly peace with which he closed life here, and entered on that life where are no perils, no anxiety, no suffering, no death. A special work had been allotted to him for that last day of his life. He had finished it and gone to his reward. He had come to Boston a week earlier than usual. Contrary to his general practice, he had taken the Norwich route on his return. All seemed to have been divinely arranged, so that this chosen and faithful servant should be honored with the responsibility of being on board that steamer to exemplify the power of the Christian faith, and act as God's ambassador to that company in those mortal perils. How great was the privilege too, to him who loved to preach beyond almost any other man, to be permitted in the last hour of life, to unfold the gospel to a company whom God, by the dangers of the ocean, and an opening eternity, was simultaneously calling to prepare to meet him!

The remains of our friend were recovered from the water, and conveyed to Norwich on Friday afternoon, where they were soon recognised by Christian friends, humanely prepared for the grave by the municipal authorities of the city, and the following day forwarded to New York. On Monday, November 30, the funeral solemnities were attended in the Rev. Dr. Adams's

church, in Broome-street, with appropriate addresses and devotional services. A vast assemblage of Christian friends, with the ministerial brethren of the deceased, testified how much they loved him, and how deeply they felt his loss.

The Prudential Committee entered on their records an appropriate minute, and also requested the Rev. Nehemiah Adams, one of their number, to deliver a sermon in commemoration of their much respected and beloved associate. The sermon was preached on the 9th of December.

In contemplating this great and painful bereavement, we must not fail to recognize with gratitude the special protection which God in his providence has hitherto extended to those who have been connected with this missionary work, either as missionaries abroad, or laborers at home. From the organization of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in September, 1810, to the death of Dr. Armstrong, the number of outward and home voyages, between the United States and foreign lands, made by persons in the employment of the Board, excluding twenty-seven of whose completion intelligence has not yet been received, is seven hundred and four. These voyages have been made by four hundred and ninety-six persons, male and female, not including twelve now on their way to foreign lands for the first time. Of these voyages actually completed, four hundred and sixty-seven have each been from fifteen to eighteen thousand miles in length. If those voyages along the coast of the United States, on the great lakes, and on the western rivers, and those from one port to another in foreign countries, varying from five hundred to three thousand miles each, are included, and to them are added the voyages made by the children of mission-

aries, the whole number of voyages will exceed one thousand; besides many shorter trips on seas, rivers, and lakes. In all these, no individual connected with the Board has been shipwrecked, or has lost his life by drowning.

The number of ordained missionaries sent out by the Board is two hundred and fifty-three; physicians, twenty; other male assistants, one hundred and twenty-two; and females, four hundred and fifty-seven; in all, eight hundred and fifty-two; none of whom, so far as information has been received, have lost their lives, or been seriously injured, in their journeyings to or from their fields of labor, by land or water. Three,—Messrs. Munson and Lyman in Sumatra, and Dr. Satterlee, west of the Pawnee country,—lost their lives by savage violence, while on exploring tours; and Rev. Mr. Benham, of the Siam mission, was drowned while crossing a river near his own house. With these exceptions, all the explorations and other journeyings of these eight hundred and fifty-two missionary laborers have been, so far as can now be called to mind, without loss of life or serious accident.

Going back to the commencement of the operations of the Board, none of its treasurers, secretaries, or agents, amounting to about fifty persons in all, have, in their various and extended journeyings by land and water, and in the almost pathless wilderness on the western frontiers and the contiguous Indian countries, met with any serious accident or calamity, till Dr. Armstrong perished in the wreck of the steamer Atlantic.

Thus suddenly, and in a most impressive manner, has passed away from among us an *eminently good man:* one whose intelligent and unaffected, yet ever-living

and ever-active piety no one doubted or failed to see. Towards God, the filial spirit in him was predominant. He seemed to be, indeed, a *child of God*, an Israelite in whom was no guile. His affections were eminently spiritual and heavenly, and very seldom, if ever, was there any thing apparent in the state of his mind, in his conversation or demeanor, which was inconsistent with his entering at once into communion with the Christian on the experiences of the internal spiritual life, or with the convicted sinner on the salvation of his soul, or with God in confession and praise. Towards men he manifested nothing but good nature and love. The cast of his features, the tones of his voice, the courteousness of his manners, revealed his heart. To speak of ill-will, or envy, or selfish or malignant passions of any kind, in connection with his name, must seem to all who knew him as altogether incongruous. In him self-seeking seemed to have no place, while his desire to please and benefit all was unbounded, and his charity almost literally hoped and believed all things favorable of those with whom he had to do. Though generally a good judge of character, he sometimes erred on this point; and when he did so, it was almost always from his unwillingness to entertain so unfavorable an opinion of men as was demanded. This genuine goodness of heart, the combined result of uncommon amiableness of natural disposition and the sanctifying grace of God, shone with peculiar lustre in the family, where he was a model of affection and fidelity as a husband and father. Few could love or be loved, impart or enjoy so much happiness in those relations, as he. His social qualities generally were remarkable; and while he loved retirement and was much in it, he also loved to commune with others, and all loved to be with him. To the most serious topics he could happily

give an aspect of light and joyfulness, or make what was sprightly and gay, and even the vein of humor which he had at command, the means of instruction and serious impression. Cheerfulness and sobriety, concern for great interests, with substantial peace and joy, were in him most appropriately combined. Naturally, he was of an animated spirit; yet there were habitual indications that serious topics were occupying his thoughts, and sad pictures, drawn from such a world as this, were passing before his mind, which often clothed him in plaintiveness, and not unfrequently called forth an audible sigh. The impression that he was a *good man* was made on all who knew him.

A *laborious servant of Christ*, too, has been removed. From Mr. Armstrong's entrance into the ministry till his last hour, his life was one of assiduous and faithful labor. He shrunk from no toil. He was never disposed to ease himself by burdening others. He obviously loved labor for Christ and the salvation of men; and the more of it he was able and permitted to do, the greater honor and favor he regarded it. His only regret seemed to be that he had no more time and strength to expend in such a cause. No interest intrusted to him suffered from indolence or neglect. His varied labors as an evangelist and a pastor, as an agent and a secretary, bear ample testimony to this. All were performed promptly and heartily, and yet without display, or thrusting himself into notice. No man seemed to be more truly willing to spend and be spent for Christ, and for human welfare than he. It was indeed his meat and drink to do the will of Christ and finish the work assigned to him.

A man of *much heavenly wisdom* has been called away from the counsels and labors of the church militant. Mr. Armstrong had opinions on matters of theology

and morals and politics, intelligently and firmly held, and frankly expressed and defended on proper occasions; but he knew how to let every one see that his mind was not engrossed by those points relating to theology, or to the welfare of our nation, or of our race, which most divide men into parties. His mind appreciated and all his powers were enlisted in something higher and better. To what *party*, as such, did he belong? With what individual did he have controversy? He was independently and fearlessly conscientious; yet whose confidence did he lose, or whom did he make his enemy? His wisdom did not arise from uncommon grasp of mind or sagacity; but the elements of it were goodness of heart, honesty and singleness of purpose, and trust in God. His love of what was right and Christian, his guilelessness and frankness, led him, as it were, instinctively, and almost intuitively, to discern and aim at the best results, and to pursue them by means and in a manner which could hardly fail to conciliate and secure approbation. This, with his promptness and assiduity, enabled him to accomplish his objects more surely and effectually than most other men.

With the countenance and character and labors of our beloved brother before the mind, and fondly treasuring up the recollections of that intercourse with him which has been so unexpectedly broken off, we would close this notice with the language of the apostle James, as being eminently descriptive of him whom we commemorate: *Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? Let him show, out of a good conversation, his works with meekness of wisdom. The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.*

CHAPTER II.

Dr. Armstrong on the Steamer Atlantic.

WHY was he on board that steamer? He was not wont to return to New York by that route. The day was tempestuous before leaving Boston, and his kind friends remonstrated against his going on that day. And why did the Great Head of the Church suffer him to go at that time, and in that manner? Known unto God are all his ways. He purposed the winds, the waves, the wreck. He saw every tear that should be shed—he had measured the anguish and bereavement that should wither the souls of so many families. And why did he so afflict his dear children, and why expose those he loved to such perils and death? We may not fathom all the reasons of the Divine Mind, yet we may know some of these reasons. We may take a view of that seemingly disastrous event, and of the fatal exposure of the subject of this memoir, which shall exhibit it not as an expression of God's displeasure, but as a dispensation of his love. Dr. Armstrong was conducted on board that ill-fated vessel by the hand of his Divine Master. It was the Hand of Mercy which led him there. God was about to make one of those terrific displays of his power which ever and anon he makes to awe into silence both his friends and his foes. In this day of confidence and boasting in human skill and power—as if man had triumphed over the elements and could rule them at his will—when men feel that they can go and come as they list—"to-day or to-morrow, go into such a city and buy and sell and get again," forgetting who holds the winds in his fists and com-

mands the waves and they obey him—when even God's people are in unusual danger of feeling confidence in human agents and agencies—God would, at such a time, by one signal display, vindicate his majesty and teach man dependence. But incidental to such a display is often an immense amount of suffering and death. Many are in the suddenness of a moment hurried into eternity. Prepared or unprepared, the awful summons comes and there is no reprieve. Such was especially the case in the wreck of the Atlantic. It was, therefore, in great mercy that God put on board that vessel the subject of this memoir: a man beloved of God and greatly esteemed of man, and, therefore, chosen of God as the forlorn hope of them who were so soon and so suddenly to be called to their final account. Some of God's people were there. Perhaps they had, in the whirl of business and of pleasure, wandered from the fold; and they were in a moment to be summoned into the presence of their Master. How gracious is Heaven to give them such a spiritual guide in this hour of their severe conflict! And there were many on that doomed vessel who were *not* prepared to meet the dread summons. They were now to be hurried away to the Judgment; and how merciful that He who hath no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but would that he should turn and live, should put on board one who should so faithfully warn them in this last trying moment. Perhaps Dr. A. was never before intrusted with so important a mission. While the Great Head of the Church chose this method of terminating his earthly labors, he chose a termination well befitting the whole course of his previous Christian life. If his days must be shortened and his life of usefulness be so suddenly closed, his most partial friends could not have desired a more befitting close. His last day, his last hour, and

probably his last moment, was spent in the service of his God. God would not leave so important a post unfilled; and you might look in vain for a man that should fill it so nobly as Dr. Armstrong did. It was a post of danger and of dread responsibility. Such posts the skilful general fills with tried, faithful, and fearless men. So did the Captain of our salvation when he had thoughts of mercy towards the sufferers on board the Atlantic. How graciously God provides till the last for the salvation of his creatures.

And this is but another instance of that admirable providential arrangement by which God is wont to *disperse* his people, and place them in situations of usefulness of which they thought not. Christians are the light of the world; and it is not a little interesting to see the *distribution* which he makes of this light—how he *scatters* his people abroad over the earth. Sometimes they go voluntarily, as business, or pleasure, or Christian duty takes them; sometimes involuntarily, as driven by persecution or compelled by some necessity. The apostles "were scattered abroad," and this became the means, in the early days of Christianity, of that wide and rapid diffusion of the gospel. The Jewish church and nation were singularly dispersed, and *their fall* became the riches of the Gentiles. War, commerce, travel, pleasure, misfortune, accident or design, have, in every age, scattered the people of God, not only among all the tribes and kindreds of the earth, but placed them in every conceivable situation where they might fulfil their mission as the children of light and the almoners of Heaven's mercy. Wherever is want, or woe, or ignorance, or suffering, there has God provided for its relief an agent of his mercy. The man who fell among thieves, and was wounded, and left for dead, was found by the "good Samaritan," who bound

up his wounds, pouring in wine and oil. When God's judgments are abroad in the earth, he sends his angels of mercy in their train, to bind up the broken-hearted, to comfort the mourners, to supply the wants of the needy, to scatter light amidst the general darkness, and speak words of warning and consolation to them who are appointed unto death. Nor does it vitiate the benevolence of God in this distribution; it detracts nothing from the wise and gracious providence in the matter, that so many of those whom God would have the dispensers of his mercy, the good Samaritans to the unfortunate and suffering, do through hardness of heart and a perverse selfishness, like the priest and the Levite, pass by on the other side. Amid the maladies, the diseases, the blighting desolations of sin, God *provides* the remedy, or, if not a remedy, a relief, and man's perversity, in not dispensing the remedy, mars not the mercy of the Divine provision.

But it was not so in the case of the Atlantic. He that was commissioned to stand there between the living and the dead nobly fulfilled his mission. Forgetful of himself, save as with a confidence worth ten thousand worlds, he commits himself and all his interests for time and eternity to the safe keeping of his covenant God, he addresses himself like a man of God to his work. All the words of comfort he spake to the trembling saints, all the words of warning he uttered to the (perhaps for the first time) awakened sinner, we may not know till the judgment make its revelations. But what we do know crowns his end with a benevolence and majesty well befitting a life of such eminent and unpretending usefulness.

So identified were the closing scenes of Dr. Armstrong's life with the wreck of the Atlantic, that we need offer no apology for the introduction of the fol-

lowing sketches of that appalling disaster. These are gathered, for the most part, from persons who wrote at the time, and who were more than eye-witnesses of those dreadful scenes.

A little volume entitled "The Loss of the Atlantic" contains notices of Dr. Armstrong and of the part he acted on board that vessel, which properly belong to this chapter. We shall therefore use it freely, and thank the writer for his simple and graphic narrative.

"Dr. Armstrong came to Boston, on the last week in November, to attend a meeting of the Secretaries of the Board. On Wednesday morning, in leading the devotions of the family at the Marlborough hotel, where he tarried, he prayed with unwonted earnestness, that each one might feel their nearness to eternity, and to be led more in their daily and hourly conduct by things unseen and eternal, so that at all times they might have the Lord present with them. He afterwards conversed with great emotion of the recent departure of beloved missionaries to heathen lands, and of the great privilege of being accounted worthy of so high calling.

"That evening he left Boston, in the Norwich train of cars, and went on board the Atlantic, where, in the most unexpected manner, he found his services deeply needed. What opportunities opened to him for words of exhortation and comfort during the long hours of peril, passed by the passengers and crew of the unfortunate steamer, and how faithfully he discharged his duties, many are alive to make grateful mention. After he had led the religious services in the cabin on Thanksgiving morning, as has been related, and had offered the last public prayer, he begged each one to remain upon his knees, and silently give himself up to

God, the only refuge of the sinner; and to do it *then*, as it might be among the last opportunities in their season of probation on earth. How many did so, the omniscient eye only knows. How powerful the motives, under such circumstances, which seem to compel the struggling soul to break loose from its earthly hopes and dependencies, and look upward to the Father of Mercies! Surrounded by the tempest, the winds and waves breaking all around him, where could the troubled spirit look for safety, but to Him who alone has power to say to the agonized feelings as well as the raging waters, 'Peace, be still?'

"This calm trust in God manifested by Dr. Armstrong, during those hours of terrible apprehension, reassured and comforted many hearts. 'I hope,' he said, 'we may be allowed, if God will, to reach the shore with our lives; but if not, I have perfect confidence in the wisdom and goodness of him, "who doeth all things well."' The hearts of the passengers seemed to yearn towards him, as towards a father; they watched him closely, and gathered around him whenever he spoke. Everywhere he was conspicuous as the Minister of Christ, addressing instruction and consolation to his heart-stricken companions, and commending them to God in prayer. Lieutenant Maynard gave him the benefits of his experience in disasters on the sea. He bound the Doctor's head with shreds of blankets, and directed him how to prepare and make use of his float. As the steamer neared the ledge of rocks, and the captain called out to every man to cling to what he could, expecting her to strike at any moment, Dr. Armstrong came up to the stanchion, dragging a heavy door. One, who was clinging to the stanchion, begged permission to attach a rope to the other end of the door. 'Certainly,' he replied, 'if it will be of any service to

you.' He did so, and declares that he felt a sort of security in being in company with such a holy man in this hour of peril. After a few moments, the Doctor said, 'I think our safest place is below, in the gangway; we shall not there have so far to fall.' He then placed himself 'midships on the lowest deck, with his arm around the stove, near the entrance of the ladies' saloon. Immediately after the boat struck, in the fall of some heavy fragments, one struck him in the back part of the head; a sea then washed him away. It is the opinion of medical men that the blow caused his instant death, and that he knew nothing of the agonized struggles of the drowning man. With twenty-five other bodies, picked up upon the shore, his was carried to Norwich. Some who looked upon the calm and holy expression of the face suspected whom it might be; his pockets were out, and all his papers being gone, he could not be identified in that way: at last he was recognized by a young minister formerly an inmate of his family, who, happening to be at Norwich, and coming down to behold the mournful train, recognised the cold features of his venerated friend."

Another writer, one of the sixty-three survivors, has drawn the following thrilling picture:

"By ten o'clock we had drifted to within half a mile of the rocky shore, against which the angry waves dashed their foaming crests in majestic grandeur. It was a sight as sublime as terrible. Every moment we expected would be our last. Hope now began to wane. Soon after the steam vessel Massachusetts came near us, and, seeing our position and signal of distress, checked her headway a little, but soon passed on. About eleven another steamer, the Mohegan, was seen

coming, which raised our hopes again, but she dare not approach within hailing distance, and soon went on her way. 'I would give a thousand dollars,' said Captain Dustan, 'for another anchor.' But another anchor he could not have. All hope from human aid now vanished, and our only trust was in God, and to him went up devout supplications for deliverance. All assembled in the cabin; a portion of scripture was read and prayer offered by the lamented Armstrong, in which he prayed that we might be delivered from the perils of the mighty deep and the pangs of death. Another followed, and prayed that, as when our Saviour went down into a ship with his disciples, and a storm arose, he would rebuke the wind and the raging of the waters, that they should cease and be calm. Prayer is ever solemn; but never did those present find a more awakening echo in their own bosoms. A few frail planks and cables separated us from eternity. A few moments, and all might be summoned to the bar of God.

"From twelve to five o'clock, P.M., the howling storm and tempestuous sea ceased not their wrath. The gale had been a hurricane. Onward towards the dread breakers we were drifted. The sun went down, and with it the last ray of hope. We were but a few cables' length from the deafening breakers; and the roaring tempest increased in its wild madness. Momentarily we expected to be dashed upon the rocks. But, though so near the rocks and hoping to be cast ashore while daylight yet lasted, the hour was not yet come. Our anchors were doubtless entangled in the rocks—the boat was nearly stationary. All night the wind blew a tornado. Before and on either side the fierce billows, increased by the heavy ground swell, like huge leviathans of the deep, seemed eager for their prey. Behind

us was the rockbound shore, rugged and black as the caves of Eolus. On the deck of our fragile bark stood the helpless child and the fond mother, the strength of manhood and the fulness of age. The perils of death by steam, and death by fire, we had passed. And now death by hunger and death by cold confronted us; or should it be a watery grave, or should we be torn piece-meal by falling timbers, or amid the rugged rocks! Daylight had gone, and the moon had ceased to lend her cheering rays. Darkness had spread her funereal pall, and the sublimity of horror was at its height.

"At half-past four o'clock, on Friday morning (27th), a tremendous sea struck her, which made every joint and timber in her entire extent tremble and groan as in the death-struggle. The cable of a large anchor, which had held on so faithfully for a day and two nights, parted; and immediately after the others snapped like threads, and ashore she went, first striking lightly twice, and then hard down upon the rocks. This was the crisis of her fate. A tremendous sea threw her up to the very top of the ledge, so far up as almost to throw her over on the other side. It was terrible and heart-rending in the extreme. In five minutes after she struck she was in pieces. In these five minutes, at least forty-five of her passengers and crew were taken from time into eternity. The screams, the crash, the war of the sea was dreadful. Over the horrors of that awful scene of war and death I would draw a veil. The thought of the sufferings of that melancholy night oppresses my brain. The howling tempest still chills my veins. The crashing of falling timbers still makes me shudder. The earthquake roar of breakers yet stuns my senses. The fearful grinding on the rocks yet grates on my ear. The death shrieks of women and children, as they sink in their cabin-

coffins into a watery grave, still rend my heart. And the solemn knell of that storm-tolling bell, as it pealed the sea-requiem of the many noble and loving hearts, will for ever ring in my memory."

Thus wrote one who, in mercy, passed safely through the perils of those appalling scenes. He was cast ashore by the waves which overwhelmed others in death.

Another more fully delineates that solemn and affecting scene, when the beloved Armstrong first became known to the passengers—when he was first made to feel that a special work was there given him to do. With the failure of Captain Van Pelt, of the Mohegan, to afford relief, hope sank in the bosom of the sufferers. The fearful reality now settled down upon them, that their days were numbered, and a dreadful death and an awful eternity were but a step before them. And to whom should they look in this hour of peril? Who, during these few hours, big with eternal interests, should guide their minds to the Great Deliverer, to Him who takes away sin? Armstrong was there. God had placed him there—a prophet and a priest, to instruct them in the way of righteousness, and, by supplications and prayers, to present them to the Great High Priest, and to intercede for His pardoning mercy. Says one of the sufferers who survived: "At that time one, whose calm and benevolent face had attracted the attention of many, assembled the passengers in the cabin for prayer. He said they were in great peril, but with God all things were possible; to Him could they alone look for safety, for the winds and waves obey him. He referred to that time when the disciples, following their Lord into a ship, a great tempest arose, insomuch that the ship was covered with waves. And

the disciples coming to Jesus, who was asleep, cried out, 'Save us, Lord! or we perish;' then he arose, and, rebuking the winds and the waves, a great calm followed. To such refuge must they, too, look in an hour like that. He then spoke of the care which God had for us: that even as the sparrow shall not fall to the ground without his knowledge, nor our very hairs be unnumbered, so let us not fear, for we are of more value than many sparrows. Thus did he strive to turn the minds of those about him to God, the only sure refuge in the storm. His fervent prayers ascended on high for God to save them from their imminent dangers, and to prepare each soul for what awaited them. It was Dr. Armstrong, one of the Secretaries of the American Board of Missions, a devoted servant of God. The clear, calm tones of his voice, reassured and comforted many hearts; while they touched a peculiarly tender chord in the bosom of one who listened. It was Lieutenant Maynard. The tones struck him as the familiar tones of childhood; the holy expression of that face was one that he had looked upon and reverenced years before. He recognized his old pastor, the pastor of his boyhood, in Richmond, Virginia. He sought the good man out, and made himself known, and afterwards had the satisfaction of doing all in his power for his comfort and preservation. Such were the Thanksgiving exercises on board the Atlantic. While multitudes on the shore, and not far off from them, were peacefully rendering their thanksgivings in the house of God that morning, this little band were assembled in the cabin of a lurching, straining steamer, amid the howling winds, but a plank's breadth between life and death."

Another witness and sufferer in the same scene thus

writes to the *Boston Traveller.* We may copy an extract which will help more fully to delineate the whole picture.

"In reference to Dr. Armstrong, Mr. Leverett says:— I first noticed him, soon after the bursting of the steam chest, fastening a life-preserver around his body, one, which from inquiry, I ascertained that he carried with him. (It was not until daylight on Thursday morning that the life-preservers belonging to the boat were furnished to the passengers.) An entire stranger, my attention was attracted by the calm, benevolent expression of his countenance. The hearts of the passengers seemed to yearn towards him as towards a father; they watched him closely, and gathered around him whenever he spoke. When he conducted the only meeting held during our peril, of which I was aware, his remarks were very brief and pertinent, and uttered in a calm, steady tone of voice. He said we were in great peril, but to God all things were possible, the winds and the sea obeying Him. He reminded us of the scene narrated in the 8th chapter of Matthew, 24th, 25th, and 26th verses; he opened the Bible and read from the 10th chapter of Matthew, the 29th, 30th, and 31st verses. He then in prayer made most fervent appeals to our heavenly Father to save us from the imminent peril in which we were placed. When the captain called us upon the upper deck, and told us to cling to whatever we could, after assisting in rigging several doors, I took my stand, clinging hold of a stancheon; soon Dr. Armstrong came up to the same stancheon. I asked of him permission to attach a rope to the other end of his door, and share it with him. 'Certainly, if it will be of any service to you,' was his reply. I felt a sort of security in being in company with such a holy man in the hour of peril."

It was amidst these scenes of appalling interest that Dr. Armstrong manfully executed his last mission on earth. From the first he was calm, confiding in his God, and about his Master's business. His own life in imminent peril, himself about to give up his last account —and with *motives to live* stronger than almost any man, he is as serenely and diligently spending himself for the salvation of others as if he had a long life before him. Standing on the verge of eternity, fully conscious of his solemn position, and surrounded by the fearful, the anxious, and the agonized, he is careful for nothing but to devote his last hours to the benefit of his fellow sufferers and to the honor of his God. How morally sublime his position! Confiding his all into the hands of his God, his life, his dear family, his soul, the cause he so much loved, he worked on till the summons came; and then he was found with his loins girt and ready. Happy man! no languishing sickness consumed him. He felt not the decrepitude of age. No tiresome days of inactivity withered his ardent soul. With his armor on and the weapons of his warfare in hand, he passed from the conflicts below to the peaceful fields above. Often during his Christian life it had been remarked of him that *he lost no time*, but was ever diligent about the great work given him to do; so, in his death, he lost no time. He took no time to die. One short step—one short moment—transported him from the lower to the upper field, where, without cessation or loss of time, he commenced his eternal round of services in fields more congenial to his high and holy aspirations. What a contrast! He bids adieu to earth amidst the strifes of the tempest and the raging of the billows. All of earth about him was a wreck; and his earthly relationships are broken up amidst the war of the elements, and the shrieks and groans of his wretched

fellow sufferers. All is now consternation and woe. But with him how soon the turmoil and commotion of the elements are hushed! How soon the wail of anguish ceases to vibrate in harsh tones upon his ear; and his peaceful spirit wings its way beyond the reach of wind and storm—where there is no night, no commotion of the tempest, no anguish, no tears, no mourning. Jesus walked upon those angry waves; and though he suffered his dear servant to be overwhelmed and crushed beneath the wreck, he was there to receive his spirit and to conduct him safe to his Father's house.

On the intelligence of the disaster reaching New York, it was said, "A clergyman, by the name of Armstrong," was among the lost. His friends feared for his fate. Mrs. Armstrong first learned the news, by the cry of the news-carrier beneath her windows. When further accounts corroborated their fears, sorrow filled the religious community, where he was so well known and so deeply beloved. Strong men, unused to tears, were seen to weep over his untimely departure. But who shall confirm the tale to the afflicted wife and family? This devolved upon Dr. Adams. The wife answered to the ringing of the bell; he took her hand in his, and its chill told him how truly she apprehended the nature of his visit; overwhelmed with the burden of his painful duty, he could not for a moment speak. "The Lord always has prepared me to receive the tidings he sends," she said, opening the way for the mournful communication. "And I knew not," afterwards declared Mr. Adams, "at which most to wonder, the mystery of that providence, which had taken away the husband and father, in the midst of his usefulness, or that power of religious principle which sustained the desolated heart of the bereaved." We might well expect that she who could say with a degree of resig-

nation at once triumphant and sublime, on a former bereavement at the death of an interesting and lovely child, "I rejoice that I had so lovely a child for my Saviour, and that he took my loveliest, for he is worthy of my best," would meet this greater bereavement with that holy fortitude which none can possess but those whose heart is stayed on God; and how greatly is he honored by examples like this! what mother can imitate it? what wife can thus glorify her great Lord and Master?

Dr. Armstrong's body was carried to the city of New York on Saturday night. His funeral services were on Monday morning at 11 o'clock, at Dr. Adams's church in Broome street. The aisles, vestibule, steps, sidewalks, and the houses opposite, were crowded by the sympathizing multitude, while many went away, unable to enter the church. Ministers and friends met at the house of the deceased, where a prayer was offered by the pastor of the family, Rev. Mr. Eaton. A large procession was then formed, to follow the body, which was borne on a bier, preceded by the officiating clergymen, Drs. Adams, Skinner, De Witt, Badger, and Mr. Eaton. Hon. T. Frelinghuysen, Drs. White, Ferris, Spring, Patton, Brigham, Robinson, A. Morrison, Esq., W. W. Chester, P. Perritt, A. G. Phelps, R. T. Haines attending as pall-bearers. A solemn stillness spread over the vast congregation as the body was ushered in and placed in front of the pulpit. Dr. Skinner commenced the services by reading the hymn, beginning,—

"Unveil thy bosom, faithful tomb,
Take this new treasure to thy trust,
And give these sacred relics room
To seek a slumber in the dust."

After singing, he read the 90th Psalm. Dr. Adams

then addressed the assembly in a strain of touching remark. He was followed by Dr. Badger, who dwelt upon the many virtues of the deceased. "It was a public calamity," he said, "to the cause of missions and all kindred institutions. It would be felt in Persia, China, India, as well as amid the islands of the sea. Zion was smitten, and the hand of the Lord was upon them." Rev. Dr. De Witt led in prayer, while the vast throng were in tears. Dr. Cox pronounced the benediction. The services being over, the body was taken to the Third Presbyterian Church in Newark, whose pulpit he had last occupied on earth, where, after appropriate services, conducted by Dr. Eddy and Rev. N. S. Prince, it was placed in a vault of the church; a numerous and deeply affected assembly were present, among whom were some of the most distinguished individuals of the State.

At a discourse delivered at Park Street Church, Boston, by the Rev. N. Adams, by appointment of the Executive Committee of the Board, commemorative of the late Dr. Armstrong, after speaking of his self-denying, arduous labors, of his fervent and excellent piety, Mr. Adams tenderly exclaimed, "Dear associate, brother, friend! thy path to heaven has been so radiant with glory, that we cannot think of thee among the dead, but as gone before us to that blessed home, to mingle thy notes of *thanksgiving*, with those of Worcester, and Evarts, and Cornelius, thy predecessors in the same field of labor."

"Among the redeemed," he proceeded, "the departed Armstrong would look with peculiar interest on the heathen converts; there would he behold the young queen of Madagascar, casting her martyr crown at the feet of Jesus; the Persian dazzled by a brighter sun than ever shone on the flowery vale of Ispahan; the

Christian, bringing forth fruit in old age; the Chinese, bowing before the great father; the Hindoo; the native of the Isles, purified from all his pollutions; the son of the forest clothed in a robe of spotless purity. He had now seen the King in his beauty, his throne and his servants,—this was enough. Courage then, soldiers of the Cross! one of our number has been taken to heaven. Let us return to our work with joy. And as the passengers on board the Atlantic shook hands but a few moments before the fatal stroke, let us pledge ourselves to our missionary brethren, to the world, and to our Master, that we will engage in our work with new diligence, our first business being to save ourselves, the next, to do all we can to save others."

In the death of Armstrong the cause of missions lost a faithful servant. He was in labors abundant. A large portion of his time was spent in visiting the churches, attending conventions, making missionary tours, and devising means and plans for deepening an interest in this great work. In times of extremity, when the funds of the Board were low, he freely relinquished a portion of his salary. He deeply felt that the real success of the missionary work would be graduated by the depth of the spirituality of the Church; and expected permanent means for carrying forward this work only in the prevalence of genuine revivals of religion. No discouragement daunted him—no diminution of funds or lack of missionary agents depressed him, while the records of revivals brought the intelligence that God was increasing the fervent, active piety of his Church.

In the absence of such manifestations, and as difficulties arose, he would say: "I do not know what we shall do unless God pours out his Spirit on the Churches." On one occasion he wrote thus to the compiler: "There

is, I trust, some increase of missionary feeling in this city, and perhaps in the churches generally. Yet we are sadly behind the Providence as well as the Word of God, in our readiness for prayer and effort in this great cause. Unless it shall please God to pour out his Spirit more extensively and abundantly than he has yet done, the prospect looks dark. Yet he has not ceased to chastise, and may we not hope, when he so rebukes our idolatrous confidence in man, that he means to draw us away from our creature dependencies, and compel us to put our trust in him, and thus prepare us for a blessing.—May it be so."

But this indefatigable servant began to feel that he had tasked his physical powers to their full measure.

Two weeks before his death, he preached in the third Presbyterian Church in Newark, and pleaded the cause of missions, with more than his usual eloquence. On being asked, at the close of the afternoon service, if he could address a few words, adapted to the youth of the congregation, he replied: "I am worn out, and if I speak again, I must go and lie down," his physical strength seeming much exhausted. He spoke again in the evening with great earnestness and fervor upon the Nestorian revival, and the great necessity of a revival here. His words always came with great power, for they flowed from a heart deeply imbued with an unction from the Holy One. His last public address was made just two weeks before the day of his death, at the chapel of the Union Theological Seminary, New York. A discussion is usually held on every Friday evening by the students; and on this occasion the question "Is it desirable that Theological Students should decide the question of personal duty in respect to the Missionary work, at an early period in their course?" was the subject selected. Dr. Armstrong was present, and was re-

quested to give his opinion. He urged the duty of an early and speedy decision for the sake of the souls who are perishing every hour among the heathen, and for the honor of Christ, whose name and merits we should seek to extend far and wide over the whole earth.

Thus suitably closed the public labors of this laborious and faithful servant. His record is on high; his works follow him. Though years have elapsed since he ceased from his labors, he still lives fresh in the remembrance of thousands who once loved to welcome him to their homes and to the sanctuaries of their God.

The Church of Christ felt the bereavement. The following record did but reiterate the feeling of many a church, and many a benevolent association throughout our land.

At a meeting of the New York and Brooklyn Foreign Missionary Society, at the Broadway Tabernacle, New York, Dec. 7, 1846, the following preamble and resolutions were unanimously adopted.

"It having pleased Almighty God to remove from this life the Rev. Dr. Armstrong, one of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions,

"*Resolved*, That this sudden and painful dispensation is to be regarded as a public bereavement, demanding the most serious attention, profound humiliation, and prayerful improvement on the part of the friends of missions.

"*Resolved*, That the fidelity, zeal and devotion, with which this beloved servant of Christ has discharged his official duties, his cheerful self-denial, indefatigable labors, fervid appeals, and assiduous industry on behalf of missions, while they furnish us with the best evidence that he has entered upon the joy of his Lord,

combine to make his departure an occasion of unfeigned grief to all who know his worth and cherish his memory.

"*Resolved*, That the cause of Foreign Missions being the cause of Him who has all power in heaven and on earth, and who has graven the church on the palms of his hands, no event, however disastrous, should be suffered to diminish or relax our exertions in this great undertaking; and moreover, as chastisements are employed by the great Head of the church, for the benefit of the churches and communities as well as of individuals, we would seriously regard these successive afflictions which have befallen the American Board, in the removal of so many of its prominent executive officers, as means designed and adapted to deepen our sympathy and augment our love and effort in behalf of that cause to which our deceased brethren were so zealously devoted, remembering the words they spake unto us while they were yet with us.

"*Resolved*, That the Executive Committee of this Society be requested, as soon as possible, to make arrangements for the improvement of this afflictive dispensation of providence, by a discourse, and other appropriate religious exercises.

"*Resolved*, That a copy of these resolutions, signed by the President and Secretary of this Society, be transmitted to the widow and family of Dr. Armstrong, with the expression of our sincere condolence, and most affectionate Christian sympathies.

"*Resolved*, That the above resolutions be published in the *New York Observer*, the *New York Evangelist*, and other religious papers.

"Signed,

"P. PERRIT, *President.*

"A. MERWIN, *Rec. Sec.*"

A great and a good man has fallen; but he fell with his armor on, at the post of danger, working while his day lasted. While we wonder that he, whose pious services seemed so needful to the church on earth, should have been thus taken, we know not how great the work he might have wrought on the last day of his life, when the very elements seemed combined to add power to his instructions, or how wide and blessed is the sphere elsewhere, in which the Lord had need of his ministrations. Let us ask ourselves, if *we* possess that confidence in God, that sweet assurance of his love, which will fit us calmly and steadily to meet the emergencies of life and the suffering and issues of death; if, like our venerated friend, we are or shall become *living epistles*, known and read of all men, of the value of *faith* and *prayer* above all that the world can give: thus honoring the doctrine of God our Saviour, and winning souls to his holy kingdom.

CHAPTER III.

Further notices of Dr. Armstrong—Rev. J. C. Smith, Washington City.

AMONG the notices of Dr. Armstrong which appeared at the time, perhaps none gave a more complete and accurate portraiture than the one prepared by the Rev. John C. Smith, of Washington, and delivered at the Monthly Concert of Prayer in the Fourth Presbyterian Church. While it very beautifully illustrates some of the happiest traits of the character of the departed as a man, it seems, in other respects, the very echo of the voice which had been silenced in the wreck of the Atlantic. Though dead, he yet speaks in accents familiar to the ears of those who used to hear him with so much delight. Is it not Armstrong, still pleading for a dying world? Are not the tones, the spirit, the sound scripture theory of Christian missions, the holy pathos with which duty is urged—are not these the true echo of the voice which had but recently died away amid the deafening surges of the ocean? And was not the sainted spirit present at that meeting? May there not be such a communion of the spirits of God's children, that the sentiments uttered by a dear friend of the departed, may be received as the sentiments of the departed yet the present one? The melancholy intelligence from the Atlantic was yet fresh in every mind. Sadness had come over many a heart, and in their sadness and depression the numerous friends of Missions and of the prematurely removed Secretary, had been and told Jesus. And is it strange —improbable, that, as "they talked together of all these things which had happened—while they com-

muned together and reasoned" as to *why* such a thing should be, not only Jesus should draw near to them and speak words of comfort, but that their recently departed friend and brother, the newly entered into glory, should be allowed to hover about a place so congenial to his soul while living, and doubly dear since dead. Hereafter we may learn that the spirits of departed friends who have been closely joined by the ties of holy love, do commune with, do communicate to, kindred spirits who are yet in the flesh.

The following paragraphs are more particularly valuable, as accurately delineating the feelings and sentiments of the beloved Armstrong in his *missionary character*. They pay, too, a deserved tribute to another of the victims of the ill-fated Atlantic:—

"Among the passengers and crew who met death in the cold waters of Long Island Sound, were more than one whom we had respected and loved. One who had mingled with us in the services of this sanctuary, after an absence of two or three years, was just about to see his beloved wife and their four lovely children, and when almost at home, perished in that howling storm. He had escaped all the perils of the sea, and the diseases of the climate; when all was past, and he almost *saw* his wife and little ones, he was swept away into eternity? Dr. Charles A. Hassler is no more. You, my brethren, will sympathize with that widow and her children. You love her too much, to think of aught else. Let your expressions of sympathy be in accordance with that love.

"But there was another passenger on that boat, familiar with all the perils of that dangerous passage, for he had been for years exposed day and night, who, with many others, passed away. You know whom I

mean, for you well knew and loved Rev. Dr. William J. Armstrong, Secretary of the A. B. C. F. M. For many years he had served the church of God in this relation! His official duties required him to be in Boston once a month. He had been there at the usual time, had finished his business, and was on his return to his office and family in New York. Little did his brethren think, at the adjournment of their meeting, that they should no more assemble for prayer and consultation about the interests of the heathen world! They, like him, are devoted men, wholly consecrated to God, and live knowing that the present is all uncertain; but it never, in all probability, passed through their minds, that death would come to any one of them as it came to Dr. Armstrong. When he said *farewell* to them in Boston, who would have thought that their next greeting would be in heaven? *Painful*, yet *delightful* thought! 'Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.' In that terrible gale of the 26th and 27th, the steamer Atlantic was awfully wrecked, and our beloved brother went from the crashing and crushing of the noble vessel, to the home of eternal calm, and blessedness, and joy, and glory.

We have read to you the shipwreck of the Apostle Paul. Has it ever occurred to you, why is this record preserved? It has been, and will be preserved. God hath done it. It possesses a peculiar interest, especially at a time like this. Expunge it from the record, and you take away from the bereaved family, the church, the country, and the world, one of the brightest illustrations of God's special providences. I assure you, my brethren, that I now read it with new interest, gratitude, and love. Here I know, that however terrible the storm, God is there, not merely because he is every where, *but he is particularly there*. There is something

more in this, than that God takes care in general of *the lives* of his creatures—much more He was present with his servant to cheer, sustain, and enable him in that dreadful time to do his Master's will. Who of all that company spoke out, and who became the director of all that exposed band?—the prisoner whom the centurion's guard were conducting to trial! Whose voice was heard above the angry roar, and whose influence was greater than the commander's? Paul's. The Apostle was *the* man, because he was the *servant* of God, and God was with him! What are storms, and tempests, and rocks, and wrecks to God! He holds the winds in his fists, and directeth in the storm! Life and death are at his disposal, and he doeth according to his wise, gracious, sovereign will. It is the Lord! We recognise God in the whirlwind and storm; and amidst all that occurs, know that he doeth all things well. In one painful respect, the wreck recorded in this chapter and that of 'the Atlantic' differs. Paul was saved and all the company; while in this our beloved brother Armstrong was lost, and many others with him! But the passage before us, after all this exception, retains its own place, and furnishes its own consolation. 'In thy light we see light.'

"I have invited you here, this evening, to improve the dispensation which has reached so many hearts, because this is the evening set apart for prayer for *missions*. The time to meditate upon this bereavement, is at least most appropriate; for nothing could have occurred, which would have affected more seriously this cause. The influences on us, are not all depressing; there is light, strong, beautiful and comforting light in this darkness. So that while we are ready to say that missions have sustained a severe loss, we are now ready to say, that the cause is in the eternal purpose of God,

and cannot therefore be affected by the loss of its subordinate agencies or instrumentalities. We, my brethren, are to regard ourselves and all others, as dispensable agents, to be relieved at any time and in any way that the infinite wisdom of the Chief Missionary may suggest. We have selected this evening as *the time* for meditating upon this great theme, viz., that all the agencies and instrumentalities are merely secondary.

TRUE THEORY OF MISSIONS.

The cause of missions is in *the purpose*, councils, and plans of our covenant God, and living, our beloved brother acted on this, and dying, if a moment of consciousness was afforded, it was his solace, and all above was light, and covenant love. The *idea* of missions is a very simple one, and is best expressed, in short, by saying, it is an errand of mercy and salvation. We often think and speak of missions as man's device, and treat the subject accordingly! Hence many neglect it wholly. Others will attend any and every other meeting but a missionary meeting, and speak of it with great coldness and indifference, if indeed they speak of it at all. There is in such a want of intelligent views, enlarged mind, or an absence of the spirit of our Lord Jesus, and I am most happy to restate the proposition for our consideration, that 'Missions are in the councils, purpose, and plans of our covenant God.'

"Why, what is the love of God but this! What the gift unspeakable!—what the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ! what all his groans, sorrows, agonies, and death upon the cross! but this, 'God so loved the world.' 'Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the

whole world?' What is the organization of the church, the continued gospel ministry, but so many parts of this one great missionary scheme of salvation from God to man? And then, as if that were not enough, the Lord Jesus said, 'it is needful for you that I go away, but if I go away I will send the Comforter to you.' The Holy Spirit is the invisible Divine mission agent from the throne of thrones—the throne of grace; and every sinner converted, and every Christian saved, are but the fruits of this great missionary plan of grace and glory.

"The simple plan of missions is, that those who love and enjoy blessings from God, send and communicate these blessings to those who have them *not*. On this principle God himself acts, and all who have any of his spirit or likeness. Hence 'to do good and to communicate, forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.' Jehovah is the one great, eternal source of blessings; and these he continually dispenses abroad, and therefore his entire gift of grace is one vast missionary heart and treasure, out of which he liberally supplies the whole world. When God was manifested in the flesh, and just as he was about to return to glory, he issued his commission to the Church, 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature, and lo I am with you, even unto the end of the world.

"The Church now is 'the salt of the earth,' 'the light of the world,' and is essentially a missionary society, and commissioned to bear the glad tidings of great joy round the world. Every spot where human beings are found, is the point to which efforts are to be directed, for God designs to save the world through the instrumentality of the Church. 'Ye are my witnesses,' saith the Lord. We are to show forth the perfections of Him who hath called us from darkness into light, and the

Church never will possess the spirit of her Lord, until all this is understood and appreciated, and each of her sons and daughters be consecrated to God in the work of conversion and salvation. Oh, that we may be imbued with this spirit, and our love and zeal be burning before God continually!

"The work of missions, we repeat, is the work of God to be accomplished through agencies and instrumentalities, called into requisition from time to time. These may be changed at any time, reformed, or disused. They are only secondary. In this connexion we find the American Home Missionary Society, and others; last, but not by any means least, 'The American Board.' This Board has about it the least possible machinery, and conducts its vast plans with the least possible expense. The Secretaries uniformly write and speak of the Board as THE AGENTS of the churches, associated to do whatever the churches may agree and determine shall be done. Perfection in its plans and operations has never been claimed. But all these are marked with great wisdom, prudence, and foresight. Great and glorious have been the results, for which every Christian heart must praise and magnify the Lord. The brethren on whom is devolved the responsibility of conducting our affairs, ever declare their weakness in grasping the great subject of Missions, and freely confess that theirs is but humble co-operation with God, and that if they die, or even withdraw, the magnitude and importance of the work will remain. Their work and ours is identical. They distribute what we appropriate. They are but almoners of our bounty to a guilty and ruined world.

Were the American Board disbanded altogether, it would not touch the great principle of its organization; or if all men were to unite and refuse to do anything

in the work of missions, we could no more affect the divine cause, than we could scale the throne, or overturn the government of God. The Board is but one member in the body; if peradventure it suffer, all the members united suffer with it. Because he who sits therein is 'King of kings and Lord of lords,' and he will accomplish all his plans. None can stay his course. He will ride on, conquering and to conquer. Who will rejoice in his triumphs, or be crushed in his power? His is the kingdom, and the power, and glory, for ever, and ever! Amen!

"In accordance with the views exhibited, are we to regard the living and dying of the friends and agents, in conducting the work of missions? The work is immortal, because divine. Its laborers here are creatures of a moment, and at any time may resign their breath. It becomes all to work while it is called 'to-day,' the night cometh, &c. Take the scriptural view of missions, and we will live in and labor for them. They are but an extended view of the gospel ministry, in which ministers and Christians are multiplying themselves all over the world, and sowing the seeds of righteousness and peace in all the earth.

"The views now submitted, I know were those entertained by our late beloved brother, and his whole life corresponded with them, for never did man give himself more unreservedly to any work than he did to this, in which he lived and died. To my mind, the work has an additional interest in the death of Dr. Armstrong. He loved it even unto his death, and his parting prayer would naturally be that the whole earth may be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."

DR. ARMSTRONG'S LABORS.

"To most of those present, Dr. Armstrong was best known as a Secretary of the American Board; and we shall speak of him first as thus employed. I have known him in all the relations of life. In my ordination in Portsmouth, Va., he was a member of the East Hanover Presbytery, and laid his hand upon my head. He, in the name of God and the Presbytery, delivered to me the solemn charge, on entering the whole work of the ministry. Never can I forget that occasion—that scene, that charge, that beloved brother! Oh how earnest he was! With what emphasis did he charge me to be faithful unto death! How his heart spoke to mine! In that service a link was formed but never broken till the dreadful wreck of the Atlantic. He has entered into his rest, while I toil on; and in the spirit of that charge, desire to be faithful as he was, until with him, I enter into the joy of my Lord. At the time of my ordination just spoken of, he was the Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, Richmond—a noble church indeed—it was as a city set upon a hill. Its light was radiated in every direction, and enlightened and comforted many a feeble band laboring up to permanency and self-support, and shedding its light all over the heathen world.

"This charge Dr. A. resigned about twelve years ago, and became Secretary of the Central Board of Foreign Missions. He travelled much through Virginia, and North Carolina, and Maryland, &c. &c., and encountered dangers, trials, difficulties, till 1835, when he was appointed one of the Secretaries of the American Board.

"In all this time, I have known him intimately. He has visited me and my people *annually*. His regard

and affection for me were seen in my appointment to a place in the Board, as a corporate member—the most distinguished honor to which I could aspire. Unexpected, never thought of, the manner in which it was done made it so much more agreeable.

"His department was domestic correspondence with pastors and churches, and raising of funds on a given field, embracing our city, and other Southern churches. He was untiring—working all day, and travelling all night, and he lost his life in this way. He was not with his family more than three months in the year. He constantly preached for his cause, and labored with and for his brethren in their churches. He had great power of physical endurance, and always taxed his strength to the utmost. His zeal never cooled. He never was weary in his work—certainly not of it.

"His duties called him to speak much of MONEY, and adopt plans to raise it; but he had no secular taint. He lived above all such influence, and asked for and received money because it was the Lord's, and considered himself the mere distributor. This was a very prominent trait in his character and labors. This was so, because he was pre-eminently *a holy man*. Not that which expends itself in weeping, or penning beautiful sentences in a diary or a letter; but acquired in communion with God, and developed in a consistent life. He lived, he walked, with God, and the more holy he became, the more consecrated he was to his appropriate work. My brethren, you will remember how full of heaven he was in his two last visits to us. I felt it good to be with him. All absorbed he was in preaching Christ to all the world, and have the churches share with him in his joys and blessing to all mankind. The children and youth of the church will call to mind his eloquent address to them, at the anniversary of the

Junior Missionary Society. Will not that society be more holy in heart and life, and do more, much more, for the Nestorians? I have never known any man who gave himself more entirely to his work than Dr. A. It was all the time. At home, abroad, in his office, in conversation, in the car or steamboat—everywhere, he carried with him this spirit of *consecration*. The longer he lived, the more he accomplished—the more pure and ardent his desires became. Even now, as I speak, I can see him in his place at the meeting of the Board last September, in New Haven, and as he was on board the steamboat in which we came together to New York. As he lived, so he died, in the discharge of duty, while exposed to death on the boat. What a beautiful testimony to the power of religion! This man of God was THE man to speak to his fellow passengers in their solemn crisis.

"The amount of his writing, speaking, preaching, and travelling, cannot be appreciated. He never spoke of what he did, only of what he *wanted* to do; but the amount must have been very large—for he was never idle, and scarcely ever sick or even unwell. But his memorial is with God, and his reward is here.

"I knew Dr. A. as a pastor in Richmond—one of our own elders knew him as such in Trenton, N. J., before he went to Richmond; and he blesses God that through him he was converted to God. As a pastor, he was untiring, and faithful, and laborious. He was blessed with revivals, and had a wide influence in the councils of the church.

"I knew Dr. A. AT HOME, in the bosom of his family, in Richmond, and New York. He gave me a home for two weeks when I was begging money to build this church. He lived in the plainest and simplest manner. His furniture was of the most ordinary sort, and his

children clad with cheap but comfortable apparel. His salary was a bare support, and required economy to make it sufficient. He had nothing over—for his hand was open, as was his heart. Man was not informed of the extent of his benefactions. These are remembered before God. He ordered his household in the fear of God. Now I can hear him, his wife, and their little children, repeating each a verse at their morning devotion. God was there. That home was one of the points of light, in that dark, that wicked city of New York. At home he had no idle time. He was reading, or working, or employed in some way for God. The inmates felt, while there, that life was short, and much was to be accomplished, and that that family was striving to do all that in them lay. His wife, now a widow in desolation, was a kindred spirit. I speak deliberately when I say, I never saw any woman whose heart was so deeply in the work of missions as this now sadly bereaved sister. This was the theme of her conversation at all times. Now she is alone. She will feel that the cause has received her only treasure. She had consecrated herself, her children, and now her husband is gone—sealing their mutual attachment to this divine work of spreading the gospel round the world. The mother and their five children are now left, in new circumstances, to prove the value of the covenant of God. Nor will they be disappointed. God is faithful. He will perform; and I am fully persuaded that this lone widow will be provided for, as others have been, and God will be their God for ever and for ever.

"Dr. A. was remarkably free from a WORLDLY spirit. He was very uniform in his habits, and rather reserved, but still disposed to conversation. In all those which I have had with him alone, or in common with others, he appeared very free from a worldly spirit. He had

no sectional feelings and prejudices. He was born in New Jersey, and lived and preached the gospel there. The first part of his ministerial life was in Virginia and the South. His removal to the North did not lessen his interest in, or affection for the South. The WORLD was his country, and for that he lived and labored. He was in the world, but not *of* the world. * * *

"As a friend, I loved Dr. A. I had the most implicit confidence in his sincerity. He was HONEST; and when he gave an opinion or counsel, you might receive it as sincere, and the best his judgment could form. I would have as soon trusted that judgment as any man's I have ever known. Years of intimate friendship had increased my affection for, and confidence in him. * * * *

"The cause, my brethren, is the same. This event should make it dearer in our hearts, and over this event we should make a fresh consecration of ourselves to God. It is THE CAUSE OF JESUS! for which he lived and died, and for which he now intercedes. Identify yourselves, then, with it, and 'be ye holy, for I am holy.' As a means, too, of growth in grace, we are to cherish this cause. It expands our hearts, raises us above all selfishness, and in it we act upon the plan before the mind of Jesus himself—the WORLD.

"Let us improve this visitation, as a season of great personal holiness, and a means of GROWTH IN GRACE."

Dr. Armstrong was a strong man. Though meek and ever unpretending, he was mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds. He possessed many of the elements of true greatness and of power. But where lay his power and his greatness? They lay in his *moral character*. He was eminently a man of God. He had power with God as an angel. He was a man of prayer. All his hopes of success and of permanent

prosperity in the work of missions lay in his strong faith that it was the work of God. This strong faith dictated his supplications at the throne of grace, and enabled him to come with a holy boldness and a filial confidence which expected no denial. The intimate friends of Dr. Armstrong were delightfully impressed with this feature of his Christian character. He walked with God; he was much before the mercy seat. We have, recently, somewhere, seen a very pleasant testimony to this fact. A gentleman in New Jersey, a friend of missions and of the late secretary, was in the habit of calling occasionally at his room, and often was it abundantly apparent that he had called his friend from the posture of prayer, and interrupted his supplications with his God. And so testify others, who had occasion to visit his room. He spent much time in prayer. He drew his strength from the God of Jacob. He went out from the place of his sanctuary clad in the armor of the upper Temple. His arm nerved with Heaven's might, he drew the bow of strength and shot no adventurous arrow. He spoke with power. It was the power of goodness. He pleaded the cause of a dying world eloquently, for he spake as his heart was warmed and moved by Heaven's benevolence towards this dying world. He felt his theme—he was inspired by the greatness of the thought which devised a scheme of mercy for this ruined world. Like the soul of his master, his soul glowed with a divine compassion for the perishing, and out of the abundance of his heart he eloquently spoke. Many a church will, for a long time to come, cherish a most affectionate remembrance of him as an organ of the American Board. He pleaded the cause so kindly, so fervently, so evangelically, as greatly to commend him to the love of God's people. He labored, not for a particular department

of Christian benevolence, but for the kingdom of Christ.

The pastors and churches in the city of New York were greatly indebted to Dr. Armstrong. He did much there to elevate the spirit of Christian piety and benevolence; and especially did he a good service in originating the Monthly Missionary Meeting for prayer, and the communication of missionary intelligence preparatory to the monthly concert. This meeting has, up to the present time, been attended in the city with the most salutary results. It is held on the afternoon of Monday, when the secretary or agent, residing at New York, presents the most recent intelligence. The Monthly Concert follows in the evening, when this intelligence is communicated to the several churches in New York and Brooklyn.

But when we say that Dr. Armstrong's power and greatness lay in his *moral character*, we do not mean that he was wanting in, or that he possessed but a mediocrity of intellectual strength. He was a man of a fine literary taste, which, especially in the earlier period of his public life, he carefully and successfully cultivated; and he possessed a mind of no common order. And, had his pursuits, in after life, led him to cherish his literary predilections and seek intellectual pre-eminence; or rather, had his views of the office of a New Testament minister been such as to allow him to aim at eminence in the literary and intellectual world, he possessed the capabilities of compassing such an end. But with him literature, science, intellectual attainments, possessed little worth except as they conduced to make him a more simple, fervid, and effective preacher of the gospel. "To preach Christ," says one who knew him well, "was so entirely the business of his life, that his sermons are often destitute of those literary attractions

which are so much admired." Yet, as a preacher, he secured, in his public administrations, the highest ends of intellect. He so prepared his sermons, and so delivered them, as to bring the truths he uttered in contact with the minds of his hearers, and to *lodge them there.* He was a happy example of a chaste and well applied taste, and a consecrated intellect.

CHAPTER IV.

Dr. Armstrong as a Pastor, Preacher, &c.

DR. ARMSTRONG has already been referred to as a pastor. In no position, perhaps, did he feel more at home, and for the duties of no other office was he more peculiarly fitted. As secretary of the Central Board of Missions he will be long and affectionately remembered as a faithful and indefatigable agent, as the kind and sympathising friend of the pastor, as the honest and ardent advocate of a great and good cause. He was a welcome visitor to the churches, and thousands will bear a willing testimony to the salutary influences he left behind him. And as Secretary of the American Board, he was in journeyings and in perils oft, in labors abundant; a judicious, active and successful co-worker; a safe and valuable counsellor, and a fast friend. In all his relations, in his official station, he was not only most implicitly confided in, as a valuable and wise coadjutor, but he was greatly beloved as a friend. The feeling of the missionary, of the agent, of his co-secretaries, of every lover of missions, was that he had lost a *friend.*

Dr. A. being known more extensively in his relations to the work of missions, it is natural that his character should be estimated according to the value set upon him in this connection. Nor was he too highly estimated in this respect. Yet we apprehend that his tastes and qualifications were more those of the good pastor than of the agent or the secretary. His forte was before the popular assembly as a preacher, and in the discharge of the various duties of the pastorate. What has already been said we think abundantly shows this. Not a few yet living rise up to call him blessed,

for the untiring fidelity and tenderness with which he discharged the duties of the pastoral office. The following brief letters indicate the manner in which he was wont to console the afflicted:—

TO MISS E. D.

"Richmond, December 11th, 1832.

"MY DEAR SISTER:—

"I sympathise with you in that sore trial which presses you down, that I may be able to console you. Yet what can I do? I can but stand as a guide post to point you to Him who alone has power to bind up and to heal.

"I fear you are looking too much to me. If so, I have little hope of being able to do you any good. It is my Master's prerogative 'to give beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garments of praise for the spirit of heaviness;' and he is 'jealous of his honor, and will not give his glory to another.' Many a time, I doubt not, Christians find means and ordinances barren, because they rest in them, instead of regarding them merely as channels through which a gracious God condescends to pour his grace into the thirsty soul. 'My soul, wait thou *only* upon God,' should ever be the language of our hearts. There are in the precious book of God topics of consolation, rich and numerous, and adapted to all the wants and sorrows of his people, while they are pilgrims in this vale of tears. Let me suggest some of them, and let your heart be lifted up in prayer, for that blessed spirit of promise who is styled 'the comforter,' and whom our Heavenly Father is more ready to give to his children when they ask, than earthly parents to give bread to their children.

"Consider then, my sister, who has sent this affliction. I was dumb, said one, I opened not my mouth,

because *Thou* didst it. Is not this enough? Does a sparrow fall to the ground without our Father? and shall we repine at his dealings? Is he not just, and wise, and good? Would not any change in his dispensations be for the worse? How little do we know the connexions, and what shall be the ultimate results, of those events which now seem to us the most dark and distressing; and this is as true of events brought about by the agency of Satan, or of wicked men, as of any others. The crucifixion of Christ was probably, at the time, matter of overwhelming grief and sorrow to all his disciples, yea, of astonishment to angels. Yet, while some of the actors in it probably sealed their own perdition, it was the greatest source of blessings to the world of sinners. So, too, when Joseph's brethren sold him into Egypt: they committed a great sin, they meant it for evil, but God meant to do great good by it. And shall we not submit to his will? Shall we not acquiesce in his wise and holy dispensations? And these remarks apply as well to all the circumstances as to the event itself. Because God's superintending providence orders time, and place, and manner, as well as the event.

"Your relative was taken out of the world in the very way which Infinite Wisdom chose. Now is he God? Your God? Your Father in Christ Jesus? And will you not say, Thy will be done? Are you not willing to let God do as he pleases? Shall we let our feelings rise up in opposition to his glory, and the good of his kingdom?

"While our friends are with us, it is both our duty and our privilege to pray and labor for their conversion and salvation. But when God has taken them away, and the matter is decided, our only duty in reference to them is *submission*. If we have done our duty in seeking their salvation while they were with us, we have

cause to be thankful. Whether we have succeeded or not, we shall not lose our reward. God will be glorified, and we profited, by every prayer we have offered and every effort we have put forth for them.

"If we have failed in our duty, we have cause for penitence, and we should learn from the past to be more prayerful and diligent in future. In either case, we have neither time nor strength to spend in unavailing grief, but should feel ourselves called upon to be up and doing, working with our might while the day lasts, because the night cometh when no man can work.

"My dear sister, do not sit down and pore over this distressing dispensation, but look away to Jesus Christ, who bore our griefs and carried our sorrows. Let it make him more precious to you. Look forward to the rest that remaineth for the people of God, where is no more death, and God doth wipe away all tears from their eyes. Let it make Heaven more desirable. Look around you upon the many comforts you still possess, and the many opportunities of being useful to near and dear friends yet within your reach. And while you thank God, take courage. Give yourself up anew to Him who has bought you with his own blood; and, as the time is short, press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. May he bless this affliction, and every affliction to you, and so fit you for his heavenly kingdom. The Lord bless you.

"Your affectionate pastor,

"WM. J. ARMSTRONG."

TO MISS E. D.

"New York, June 28th, 1839.

"MY DEAR SISTER:—

". . . . . It pained us to hear that you were still weak and suffering. The Lord has given you a

large share of that fatherly discipline which he promises to all his children. Yet I trust you often feel now, as I am confident you will joyfully acknowledge at a coming day, that 'he hath done all things well,' afflicting you 'in very faithfulness,' and causing 'all things to work together for your good.' He cares far more for our holiness, and our everlasting blessedness, than for our present comfort or ease, and hence in proportion as he loves us he chastises us, when his wisdom discerns that our highest good will thus be most signally promoted.

"What a consolation it is that we are in the hands of one who cannot err, and whose love to us, as it is undeserved and sovereign, so it is boundless and unchangeable. Let us meekly kiss the rod, and while he corrects or refines us by affliction, cling more closely to him, and strive and pray to have no will but his. Have you read the memoir of Mrs. Hawkes? It is a precious book, especially for the afflicted.

"It may be that our wise and loving Redeemer designs to take you to himself soon, and that he has laid upon you so large a portion of suffering and sorrow since he took you into his school, because it was his purpose to complete your education for heaven at an early day. Or, he may design that you shall glorify him mainly by meek and patient submission, rather than by active exertion in his cause. In either case, if we knew his *whole* plan, we should see that it was perfect. We do not know all now, but what we know not now we shall know hereafter, and humble, child-like confidence now may anticipate the bright and clear vision of a better world, and rejoice in the *promise* of God as in a present reality. But it is much easier to talk about these things than to realize them, and feed upon them, when pain and weakness distress us, and

the grave seems just ready to open before us. May you, my dear sister, enjoy his sensible presence in the chamber of sickness, and on the couch of pain; and when he calls you to go hence, be it sooner or later, be enabled to glorify him by a meek and humble trust, and a joyful testimony to his faithfulness and love.

"I am, as ever,

"Very affectionately yours in Christian love,

"WM. J. ARMSTRONG."

TO MISS E. D.

"New York, May 15th, 1839.

"MY DEAR SISTER:—

"It pained me to hear that you are again a prisoner, and suffering severe pain. If we did not know that *our best friend* sends these afflictions, and as the choicest tokens of his love, how hard it would be to strive against impatience and despondency; and even with this assurance, though the spirit is willing the flesh is weak, and it is only as his grace sustains us, and we are enabled to hang upon his promises, that we can say from the heart, 'Thy will be done.'

"But let us look to him who 'chasteneth us as a father chasteneth his children,' and we shall be supported. What wise and tender parent ever gave a child a more costly token of love than in chastening him, not for his present ease, but for his highest eternal good! Even so, 'whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth.' Read the 103d Psalm, and the first part of the 12th chapter of Hebrews, and may the Holy Spirit apply those precious truths with sweetness and power to your heart, and I am sure you will not only 'rejoice in the hope of the glory of God, but glory in tribulation also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experi-

ence, and experience hope, even the hope that maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our heart by the Holy Ghost given unto us.' How fast our friends are passing into eternity! We shall soon feel as if the larger portion had gone before us, and that in this respect, also, heaven has more to attract us than earth. Well, if they were Christ's friends, death has triumphed only over their poor frail bodies. Our friends are not in the grave where we laid their cold and senseless dust. No; they are with Christ, made perfect in his likeness, enjoying a communion with him, which nothing can interrupt or mar, and showing forth his praises as they never did on earth. And our turn will come. Let us wait patiently all the days of our appointed time,and, in sickness and suffering, sing—

"'Though painful at present, 'twill cease before long,
And then, O how pleasant the Conqueror's song.'

"I have just read an account of the last moments of an excellent and laborious, but afflicted servant of Christ, who fell asleep in Jesus on the 19th of December last, at Basle, in Switzerland. As he was dying, he desired those around him to sing a hymn, closing thus:

"'As ivy clasps the oak, so may I cling to Thee,
Be thine in life and death, yea, thine eternally.'

"As they closed, he said: 'Light breaks in! Hallelujah!' and departed, to be with Him whom his soul loved. Yes, dear sister, all things are ours. Life and *death*, if we are Christ's. Be it our concern to lean upon Him, doing his will and suffering his will, and his grace shall be sufficient for us; and in proportion to our weakness and unworthiness shall his power and

love be magnified in us. May he teach you more and more, as he has in days past, that he is faithful and true, and that having loved his own, he loves them to the end. Let us hear from you often. The Lord keep and bless you.

"Very affectionately yours,

"WM. J. ARMSTRONG."

The following notice taken of Dr. A.'s death in Richmond, Va., where he was for some years Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, indicates the kind remembrance which was entertained of him as a pastor and a Christian man in that city:—

"The session of this church has received, with deep sensibility, intelligence of the sudden death (by the wreck of the steamer 'Atlantic') of their beloved friend and christian brother, the Rev. Wm. J. Armstrong, D. D., Secretary of the 'American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions,' and formerly Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in this city. By this melancholy event, the church of Christ has been deprived of one of her most devoted ministers, and the cause of Foreign Missions of a warm friend and able advocate.

"*Resolved*, That in behalf of this church, we tender to the A. B. C. F. Missions, and especially to the bereaved family and friends of our departed brother, our lively and heartfelt sympathy, under this trying bereavement.

"*Resolved*, That as Dr. Armstrong had appointed to preach in this church on the 3d Sabbath in this month, and receive our annual contribution to the cause of Foreign Missions, the day be still appropriated to that object; and that the Pastor be requested to preach a sermon on

the occasion, with special reference to the death of our departed friend and brother."

By order of the session.

J. C. STILES,
Pastor of the United Pres. Church,
Shockoe Hill.

SAMUEL REEVE, Clerk.

Much might be said of Dr. A.'s domestic character. But in no way can we in a few words delineate it so pleasantly and truthfully, as is done in the following brief letter from Mrs. A., which we are here permitted to insert. Though it be the tribute of an affectionate wife, it is doubtless a just tribute to actual worth:

Orange, N. J., Aug. 1st, 1851.

"REV. HOLLIS READ:

"DEAR SIR,—It is cause of regret that I cannot furnish you with a private journal detailing my lamented husband's daily Christian experience and labors. A diary commenced in college, reveals a deep experience of the conflict with sin and a delightful reliance on the atonement and merits of Christ. It was there, at the age of 18, he consecrated himself to the ministry, and commenced those active labors which were blessed in the conversion of souls. Letters of sentiment or friendship he seldom wrote, except when a parishioner or friend needed counsel or consolation. A few of these you have.

"The work of grace in his soul was greatly quickened from time to time by bereavements. Early in life the loss of beloved parents, and of a companion worthy of his love, taught him meek submission to his heavenly Father's will. Subsequently a sister, brother, son, and daughter, were removed from earth. Each

of these losses seemed to give him an impulse heavenward, and it was evident to his friends that a peculiar tenderness and unction were added to his preaching. This was often poured forth in extemporaneous effusions which we lose in the written sermons.

"As a husband and father the natural benevolence of his heart shone out in daily words of kindness or acts of beneficence. He governed by love, while a mild firmness guided all his parental acts. Being much from home, his children could have but little of his instruction; yet the last duty performed for them was teaching the shorter catechism. His last Sabbath on earth was a day of intense bodily pain, borne with a heavenly expression which I shall never forget. It was the only silent Sabbath during his ministry, except one when a Pastor in Richmond, Virginia, where he had well nigh fallen a victim to the cholera. But his valuable life was spared for that missionary work which engrossed all his powers. When declining in health I urged him to retire to a country parish, where comparative quiet might revive his exhausted strength. His answer was, 'I prefer to live and *die* in this blessed cause.' Constant apprehension was felt in the family circle lest his over-taxed energies should suddenly fail. This tended to prepare us for our great loss. His constant petition that God would prepare us for his Holy will, was answered in that dreadful hour when his body was brought home a lifeless corpse. We were not permitted to murmur or sink, but through sustaining grace, were enabled to say, 'justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne.' How soothing in the hour of affliction to contemplate the redeemed spirit, rejoicing in the perfect likeness of Christ.

"The promises to the widow and the fatherless have been abundantly verified in our case, and prove that

none who trust in Him shall be forsaken. We feel unworthy of the blessings, temporal and spiritual, that have crowned our lives. To our covenant God and Saviour may they all be devoted, and the children honor the memory of their father with much Christian regard.

"Yours sincerely,
"C. C. ARMSTRONG."

Mrs. Armstrong speaks of the "natural benevolence of his heart." This was read and known of all men as a prominent characteristic of the man. And a trait so characteristic in life, we might expect would manifest itself when he stood amidst the perils of death. Mrs. A. relates an instance beautifully illustrating this: A plain man from the West called on Mrs. Armstrong soon after the wreck, and with deep emotion, related that he was the only survivor of three, who knelt together in prayer at that trying hour when they momentarily expected death. On rising, Dr. A. looked on him with affectionate earnestness and said, "my brother, I love you." How much like heaven—how much like the every day tenor of his life. "Christian love," says one that well knew him, "habitually characterised his words and actions. His family well remember that that charity which hopeth all things and beareth all things habitually governed him."

"Punctuality," we are assured from the same source, "was a prominent trait of Dr. Armstrong's character. His people always saw him in the pulpit or at the prayer meeting *in season*. His business engagements were most scrupulously met." So exact and prompt was he in all pecuniary matters that, at the time of his death, though so sudden and unexpected, scarcely an account remained unadjusted. Weighty and engrossing as his public

duties often were, he never overlooked even the minutiæ of life's common duties.

We are permitted to insert here some additional facts relative to Mr. Armstrong's early missionary life in Virginia, and a further testimony as to the estimation in which he was held where he long labored and was well known, kindly furnished by the Rev. Dr. S. B. Wilson, long the honored pastor at Fredericksburg, now Prof. of Theology in Union Theological Seminary. Dr. Wilson had known Mr. Armstrong from his first coming to Virginia as a missionary. He knew, loved and honored him up to the time of his death. In a letter dated Union Theological Seminary, Sept. 24th, 1851, Dr. Wilson says:—

"My acquaintance with the late Rev. William J. Armstrong, D. D., commenced soon after his licensure, when he came to labor in Virginia as a missionary. In this service he continued some time, preaching in destitute places on both sides of the Rappahannock river, below and above Fredericksburgh. His ministrations in this destitute field were in a high degree acceptable to the people, and it is believed were in many cases blessed to the conversion of sinners, and the edification and comfort of Christians, scattered as sheep without a shepherd. He was earnestly solicited to settle in more than one place in this region, where no church had ever been organized, and where the people had previously enjoyed no opportunity of hearing the voice of a Presbyterian minister. These earnest solicitations, he reluctantly declined from a fear that the climate on the tide water of Virginia would not suit his health.

"His attention was next directed to the beautiful, fertile, and healthy country that lies immediately on

the east side of the Blue Ridge. After laboring for a few months in the counties of Orange and Madison, with great acceptableness to the people, he concluded to take charge of the church in Charlotteville, then recently organized, and to which he had been cordially invited.

"This selected field of labor was one of great importance. Charlotteville was the county town of Albemarle, distinguished for its wealth, and for the intelligence of its inhabitants, and at that time selected as the seat of the university of Virginia, which was then being erected under the direction of Jefferson. It was a position also of no little difficulty; for in no part of the State was infidelity more rampant, and sustained by greater weight of character, both from high intelligence and political influence.

"But Mr. Armstrong, young and inexperienced as he was, proved himself qualified for his station. He conducted himself with so much wisdom and prudence, that the mouths of gainsayers were stopped, prejudices were removed, the truth, the necessity, and the infinite value of Christianity were established, and infidelity retired into secret places. The fruits of his labors, cherished and matured by his worthy successors, may be seen to this day, not only in the church to which he ministered, but in the respect shown to religion in all the region round about. By many, in that place and county, his memory is still cherished with the highest esteem and the most ardent affection.

"On the removal of Dr. John H. Rice from the First Church in Richmond, to the Professorship of Christian Theology in Union Theological Seminary, Mr. A. was selected with great unanimity to be his successor. No stronger evidence of the high estimation in which he was held could be given, than his selection to be the Pastor of

the First Church in the capital of Virginia, and the successor of such a man as Dr. Rice. Important and responsible as was the position to which he was now called, he fulfilled its duties to the entire satisfaction of his flock. Under his ministry, his church and congregation so much increased, that a new and larger edifice became necessary. Few pastors have been blessed with larger accessions to their churches than he enjoyed.

"As a man, Mr. A. was endowed with talents above mediocrity. His literary attainments were not of the first order, but they were considerable, and fitted him in an eminent degree for the duties of his station. As a christian he was humble, sincere, consistent, and full of ardor. In the social circle he was a cheerful, instructive, and agreeable companion. As a preacher, it was his custom to prepare diligently and carefully for his pulpit services. His sermons were well calculated to instruct, excite, and comfort Christians, and to awaken careless sinners. The fundamental doctrines of the gospel, as held by Calvinists, were preached by him fully and plainly. His style of composition was simple and plain, such as the most illiterate could understand, while the most accomplished scholars could find nothing offensive in it. There was in nearly all his ministrations an unction which proved how sincerely he believed what he spoke, and how tenderly he felt for his hearers. Such were the rich stores of truth treasured up in his memory; and such the fervor of his feelings, that on an emergency, he could speak extempore, with great appropriateness and power.

"On ecclesiastical judicatories, and other associations for benevolent objects, Mr. A. was a punctual attendant, and faithful in the performance of the duties assigned him. In all his intercourse with his brethren he was

kind and courteous, and hence was highly esteemed and greatly beloved by all who knew him."

Many are still living who will recognise in the picture, presented in the following extract, the preacher whom they once loved to hear, and to whom, under God, they were greatly indebted in the things that pertain to the spiritual life:—

"Albemarle, October 26th, 1851.

"MY DEAR FRIEND AND SISTER:

"At the time when Dr. Armstrong visited Charlotteville in company with Messrs. Kirk and King, I was pursuing my studies at the university of Virginia. Partly out of respect to the Misses Terrell, and partly from curiosity to hear one whom they considered an eloquent man as well as an excellent preacher, I accompanied them on Sabbath evening to the Court House. Miss E. Terrell had stated to me that, on a former occasion, during the time of Mr. Armstrong's ministry in Albemarle, her brother had gone to the Court House to hear him. As he entered, and paused for a moment, leaning against the door frame, his attention was arrested by some striking expression or commanding attitude of the speaker, and without materially changing his posture, he listened in wrapt attention to the end of the discourse. When the services were over and Mr. T. was retiring, a friend said to him, 'There were many who wept at that sermon.' 'Yes,' said Mr. T., 'and one must have had the heart of a lion, not to weep.'

"From this recital, my mind was prepared for something interesting. I was at that time a self-righteous moralist, believing that I saw as clearly, and felt and acted as well as most others. I fully came up to the description of character to which the text and sermon

were addressed. The sermon was a solemn and powerful warning and invitation on Rev. iii., 17, 18. 'Because thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing,' &c., &c.

"Under that sermon I received impressions which were never effaced. I listened with intense interest, never withdrawing my eyes from the speaker; and in consequence of being obliged to sit in such a position that two candles were nearly in my line of vision, my eyes, then strong, were made sore for nearly a week. Two other individuals, present on that occasion, were more affected than myself. One (a young lady) sank down from her seat, and another was quite overcome. Mr. King was afterwards heard to remark that if Mr. Armstrong, in his visits to the country, generally preached as he did on that occasion, it was no wonder that he did good; and I well remember that when I afterwards spoke of it to one of Mr. Armstrong's elders, he remarked, that much as his session valued his ministry, they could scarcely regret that he was frequently called to preach for brethren in the country, as they generally heard, sooner or later, that his occasional labors of that sort were blessed.

"Believe me, with much respect and affection, your brother in Christ, "A. L. HOLLADAY."

Such testimonials are a sweet savor, a precious ointment, more to be desired than fine gold. But such was the esteem in which this beloved man was everywhere held. He was eminently a man *beloved*. Few have shared so largely in men's best affections. In a note accompanying the above sketch, Dr. W. says: "I only regret that the sketch I have been able to give is not more worthy of one so generally esteemed and loved by all who knew him in Virginia."

Few men knew Dr. Armstrong better or more favorably than Mr. Frelinghuysen. He was wont to hear him preach when the preacher was in the dew of his youth in Trenton, and well appreciated the peculiar power of Dr. A. in the pulpit then and in after life. And he well knew him as Secretary of the American Board of Missions. The following letter which we have been so kindly furnished with permission to use, indicates in what estimation Mr. F. held him as a preacher, a man, and a Christian.' At a single stroke, he thus most graphically and beautifully delineates the man: "As a pastor, a preacher, a Secretary of the Board, *he was in earnest.* All around him felt it, they could not but feel it. And this made him so effective a laborer in the cause of his Master." But I will quote the letter entire:—

"New Brunswick, October 7, 1851.

"DEAR SIR:

"I duly received your letter requesting, in behalf of Mrs. Armstrong, such recollections of her excellent and lamented husband as I might be able to communicate; and especially in regard to him as a preacher, and in his official relations to the American Board of Foreign Missions.

"I very often enjoyed the privilege of hearing him, while he was a stated minister, at Trenton, N. J., and the impression made upon my mind, deep and unfading, was that of uncommon earnestness, sincerity, and power. He commenced in his calm and solemn manner; he rose with his subject; his mind kindled and his heart warmed, as he discoursed; and towards the conclusion he poured his whole soul into it, as if he thought he might never speak again, and as if some impenitent friend before him might never hear again the voice of warn-

ing and the invitations of mercy. I think that this was the ruling element of his character. As a pastor, a preacher, a Secretary of the Board, *he was in earnest.* All around him felt it; they could not help feeling it; and this made him such an effective laborer in the cause of his Master. He loved the cause so much that he forgot himself. He was disinterested, as few men have attained.

"There was, besides all this, in his personal intercourse, a Christian courtesy and kindness of manner that seemed to spring up from a heart like the beloved disciple's, and as if he had himself lain in the Saviour's bosom. His countenance beamed with a heavenly benignity. No one of his friends can ever forget, or cease to love, that intelligent, persuasive, and happy countenance. May his mantle fall on many such, for many such are needed.

"These, in brief, my dear sir, are some of the strong points that I remember of the Rev. Dr. Wm. J. Armstrong, a man dear to the church of the Redeemer; and that will, I doubt not, be held in everlasting remembrance. With affectionate regards to Mrs. Armstrong and her children,

"Yours, respectfully and truly,

"THEODORE FRELINGHUYSEN.

"REV. HOLLIS READ."

CHAPTER V.

Other reminiscences.—His early ministry in Charlotteville.—Letter to Mrs. Kelly.—To his sister.—To his daughter on her birthday.—Armstrong in his first field of missionary labor.—Conclusion.

SINCE preparing the foregoing pages, additional papers have been furnished, too beautifully illustrative of the character of our friend not to be allowed a place. As the object has been, not to present a chronological biography, but to portray the character of Dr. Armstrong as he lives in the memory of his friends, the following papers will serve to fill out the portraiture. In the first, we have the "Recollections" of a friend (unknown to the writer), who gives us a graphic and charming delineation of Mr. Armstrong in a most interesting part of his life. The second is a private letter from himself to a female friend and member of his church in Charlotteville, which draws out the *heart* of the friend, the pastor, the missionary, and the private Christian. The third is a short letter to a daughter on her birthday. The fourth, a very characteristic letter to his sister, full of affection, ardor, and Christian fidelity to a beloved one who was out of Christ. The last is an exceedingly interesting communication from a clerical friend, happily delineating the general character of Dr. A., yet presenting some particular traits of that character, and at the same time bringing before us certain delightful features of the churches amidst which Dr. Armstrong labored during his connection with the Central Board of Missions, which are perhaps not generally known.

RECOLLECTIONS OF DR. ARMSTRONG'S LABORS IN CHARLOTTEVILLE, VA.—BY A FRIEND.

"The summer of 1819 was a season of great drought through all this region of country. The vegetation was burnt up, the streams were dried, and everything indicated the want of reviving showers. The moral face of things was as desolate as the natural. God's people were languishing, the seed of truth fell into a soil without moisture, and the gospel hardened heart was as incapable of bearing fruit as the parched earth. In this hour of despair to the Christian's heart, when there was no prospect of ingathering to the Master's kingdom, Mr. A. arrived. The state of things had so long been miserable, that even God's people had almost ceased to hope. It was, therefore, with no very high expectations that the three Presbyterians, all who were in the place, accompanied their youthful missionary to the Court House, where he was to preach, for there was no church in Charlotteville then. But God was better to his people than their fears. Mr. A.'s first sermon was the occasion of much heart-melting to the three of God's people who were to be the holders up of his hands. After two months of labor it was proposed to hold a communion season. And already the hearts of twelve had been renewed by the Spirit of Grace through his instrumentality, and were ready to confess Christ before men. For three years he continued to preach here and at South Plains, and many were added to the church of such as should be saved. A lady who was present at the meeting of the session, preparatory to the first communion, told me that she should never forget the scene. Amongst the twelve then admitted were some who had already passed the allotted three score

and ten, who, having spent their lives without hope and without God in the world, now saw the joys of this life flowing from them day after day, and felt themselves to be descending to a dark and comfortless grave. God made our dear Mr. A. the prophet at whose command their eyes were opened. One of the most venerable of these, at the session alluded to, leaning like a pilgrim upon his staff, his grey locks falling upon his shoulders, and the tears rolling down his furrowed cheeks, spoke in such a way of the goodness and mercy of God as manifested in his salvation, that all who were present caught the spirit of his tears and praises, and wept and praised with *him*. In the Sabbath school his labors were also much blessed. Mrs. Kelly, who was the superintendent of the school, has often told me of the great interest with which the children heard him, and the blessed results which attended his addresses. Many were converted to God in the days of their youth—some of whom soon fell asleep in Jesus. But in the trying hour it was evinced that they had been led indeed to the Good Shepherd who taketh the lambs in his bosom, and they heeded not the swelling of Jordan.

"In the family circle he was eminently fitted for usefulness. His was a devoted piety, but not a Pharisaical austerity. He was a man of God and a man of the people. He had a ready access to every heart, for every heart was filled with love to him. You have a picture of his fireside intercourse in the copy of the letter sent you. To conclude; we would say, that his ministry was eminently successful throughout his whole charge, which was scattered all through the county. And we here love to think of him as rejoicing around the throne of God and the Lamb with those who were redeemed through his instrumentality."

The tender interest which Mr. A. felt in the lambs of the flock, and especially in their religious training, as referred to above, was not diminished as in after years the field of his labors enlarged, and the duty of office pressed more heavily upon him. He loved children, noticed them much, and always had a word that should please and instruct them. Another friend who knew him well, speaks of the great care he afterwards took, when in the pastoral office, to encourage habits of *active piety* among the female portion of his charge. He urged them on to habits of active benevolence—though not to the neglecting of those domestic duties where lies the field of woman's labor and honor; he encouraged female prayer meetings; lost no opportunity, public or private, of dropping a word of caution and encouragement into the ear of the mother; and particularly did he enjoin on the recently converted the duty of at once coming out and sharing with their older brethren in all the social and public duties of the Christian; duties which might be regarded as a cross in after life might be made easy if entered upon early.

"Trenton, New Jersey, January 18th, 1823.

"MY DEAR MRS. KELLY:—

"I little thought when I was with you, that two years and six months would pass without my having any intercourse, verbal or epistolary, with my dear friends in Charlotteville. But it so has happened. Why, I can scarcely tell. Not on my part, because my friends are forgotten, or remembered with indifference. The recollection of their kindness will be obliterated from my memory only when the hand of death shall erase everything earthly that is recorded there; and the bonds of Christian affection, strengthened by so many seasons when we took sweet counsel together as

we went to the house of God, or when by the fireside and at the family altar we had fellowship with our glorious Saviour and with one another, will endure when every earthly tie is sundered, and bind our hearts together in that blessed world where friends in Christ shall never part. He who knows my heart, knows that I often think of you all, and cease not daily to remember you in my prayers. Could the excursions of imagination become realities, you would often see me sitting in your back parlor, listening to you while you were singing, or joining in conversation, or courting a kiss from my little coy favorite Mary, or laughing at Mr. Kelly's pet kitten, as it played its tricks for our amusement.

"But why speak of these things. God hath cast our lots in wisdom and goodness, and though we are separated, perhaps to meet no more on earth, yet we are, I trust, one in him; we may meet in spirit at his mercy seat. We have one Father, one Saviour, who hath bought us with his precious blood; one sanctifier, who dwells in all that believe; one faith, one hope, one well of life, one source of comfort in affliction, one support in view of death, one advocate on high, one eternal home.

"Oh! may none of us be found wanting in the day when they shall come from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south, and sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God.

"I rejoice to know, that after being destitute for a season, the Lord has sent you one to break to you the bread of life. By a letter of Mr. Bowman to a friend of his in Princeton, I have heard with pleasure that his prospects of usefulness among you are encouraging. The Lord give him many souls in Charlotteville, as seals

of his ministry. May he be blessed to comfort those who love Christ, and to save sinners, abundantly more than ever I have been. I should be sorry to think that you had ceased to love me, but I hope that you will love him at least as much as you did me, nor will I complain if you like him better. I regretted very much that I did not get better acquainted with brother Bowman before he left New Jersey. My love to him. May the Lord strengthen his hands, and encourage his heart.

"Since I wrote last to Mr. Kelly, my health has been generally good. I may say, transposing the words of the apostle John, 'I wish above all things my *soul* prospered and be in health as my *body* is.' But 'alas, my leanness, my leanness; I am pained to my very heart.' During the past year we have enjoyed something of the gracious presence of the Lord. About thirty-three or thirty-four have been added to the church, but the present is a season of coldness. Ordinances appear in a great degree barren, and the word almost without effect. Pray for us, my dear friend; it is *winter* with my soul. My father and his family are well. My congregation treat me with much respect and kindness, and I need only the presence of Christ, and larger measures of his grace, to make me happy. But, oh, the deceitful heart, the deceitful world, and deceitful sin!

"Write to me, I beg of you, immediately; you do not know how anxious I am to hear from you. Tell me about my old friends at Charlotteville, and at South Plains. Tell me how the cause of Christ prospers among you. Do you still keep up the female prayer meeting? Do you still pray for me? My love to all. May you and my dear Mr. Kelly enjoy much of the

presence of Christ, and be enabled to walk together in all the ordinances of the Lord blameless.

"Yours, &c.,

"WM. J. ARMSTRONG."

TO SARAH MILNOR ARMSTRONG ON HER ELEVENTH BIRTHDAY.

"MY DEAR CHILD:—

"You are now ten years of age. More than half of the children who were born the same year that you were, are now in eternity; but God has spared you. Nine tenths of the children in the world, of your age, have never heard of the love of Christ, and have none to instruct them or pray for them. But you were dedicated to Christ when you were an infant; you have been instructed and prayed for every day. If you live ten years more, you will be a woman. The time will soon pass away, and if you should grow up and have no love to the Saviour, and no hope in him, what will be the end of it? My dear child, your heavenly Father says to you to-day, 'Give me thy heart; they that seek me *early* shall find me.' Will you not hear and obey him now? What joy you would thus give to your loving mother and

"Affectionate father,

"WM. J. ARMSTRONG."

TO MISS MARY ARMSTRONG.

"Richmond, April 16, 1828.

"MY DEAR SISTER:—

"I heard last evening that our sister Sarah was no more among the living. Until recently, we have, as a family, been highly favored. Few families so large as

that of our dear parents, are spared so long to each other. But God seems now to be admonishing us, by repeated bereavements, that this world is not our home, and that unless we secure the ever living Saviour as our Friend, we must, in a little while, be bereft of all. How important is it that we should apply our hearts, diligently and prayerfully, to learn the lessons which he teaches. If we do, it shall be well with us; but if being often reproved we harden our hearts, what can we expect but sudden and remediless destruction. It is painful to part with sister Sarah, but in her removal we have much to console us. Our sorrow is not for her, but for her babes, her husband, and ourselves. She has gone, we trust, to join our dear parents, and other dear friends, in those abodes where sin, pain, and death, are unknown. How differently should we have felt if sister Mary or Frances had been called away instead of Sarah! Could we then have cherished the same hope? This thought, my dear sister, has struck me with much force in reflecting upon this dispensation of our Heavenly Father. Have you considered it? Have you sincerely inquired of your own heart, 'am I prepared to leave all things earthly to go into eternity? to appear before the heart-searching and holy Judge? to have my everlasting destiny unchangeably fixed?' You have, my dear sister, been consecrated from your infancy to God by our pious parents. You have been carefully instructed, you have been often prayed for. You have been striven with by the blessed Spirit of God; you have sometimes been almost persuaded to give your heart to Christ. But where are you now? What fruit has been produced by so many means and mercies? Consider this matter seriously, prayfully. Do it *now*, when you have just been called, by the Providence of God, to look into the

grave and into eternity; when you have just seen the power of religion to sustain and comfort; when all things beside were wholly unavailing. I cannot express to you how anxious I feel that this affliction should be sanctified to those who are yet out of Christ, and specially to you, as the oldest of our family, who has not made a profession of religion. My dear sister, be entreated *now* to give your heart to God. Realize that you are a sinner, exposed to the displeasure of the Almighty, and in danger of being for ever banished from his presence; that Jesus Christ is the only and the all-sufficient Saviour of sinners, as able and as willing to save you as ever he was to save any; and now cast yourself at the foot of his cross in penitence and faith. *Do it now*, for life is short; we know not what a day may bring forth. We procrastinate in this concern at an infinite hazard. Now is the accepted time. May God bless you with a new heart, and teach us all to love him and live to his glory, that we may all meet at last in his presence.

"Your affectionate brother,

"WM. J. ARMSTRONG."

"REV. H. READ:—

"Dear Sir,—It affords me sincere gratification to learn that you have in process of preparation, some biographic memento of the late lamented Dr. Wm. J. Armstrong. Let not the life of so good and so useful a man be limited to the few revolving suns and seasons which he spends in the flesh. Not only is it true, that the good which a man does lives after him, but the *life itself* of the truly good man, in its holy and efficient tendencies, lingers on this side of the tomb while he sleeps in it; or rather, while he soars beyond it. When, since the day of their birth, have Baxter, and Bunyan,

and Doddridge, and Payson had so much of the substance and power of life in the world, as at the present time? The grave, instead of swallowing up their vitality, seems to have disclosed new sources of it; the rivulets from which, falling into the main current, have swelled it into a mighty river, widening and deepening and fertilizing with salvation a desolate world, as it goes onward to eternity.

"Was it not thus even with the blessed Saviour himself? His death, not less than his life, was necessary to the consummation of his grand scheme of beneficence; 'I tell you the truth, it is expedient for you that I go away.' And, as in his case, the mightiest manifestations of the power of God were not put forth until after he had passed to the cross, to the sepulchre, and to his eternal glory, so, in his indulgent goodness, our Heavenly Father often immortalizes and enhances, in this world, the beneficent energies of his servants, after they are taken to their rest in heaven. Their bodies have gone to the dust; their tongues are silent in the tomb; but those virtues which they have breathed around them, those truths which they have preached and *lived*, form a representative embodiment which, incorruptible by time, and invulnerable to disease, will augment and prolong their influence for good till the blessed consummation comes. So it may be, and so I trust, it will be with him whose life and influence we are aiding to perpetuate.

"My acquaintance with the subject of your memoir commenced in the spring of 1835, and was sustained with a high degree of intimacy, and, I think, with mutual pleasure, to the end of his useful life. At the time referred to, the American Board, for the better accomplishment of its benevolent enterprise, had recently organized a sectional auxiliary at the south,

called 'The Central Board.' This society enlisted the services of Mr. Armstrong as its Secretary or general agent; and it was in that capacity that he visited Charlotte, North Carolina, where I was residing as pastor of the Presbyterian Church. He came on a mission to the churches, and his object was, by the diffusion of missionary intelligence, by the inculcation of divine truth, and by his personal intercourse with the ministry and the people, to awaken a healthy interest in the great cause of missions, and lay a foundation for its permanent and increasing support; and the success with which he accomplished that object, while he made himself felt to be a blessing to our churches, gave the best proof that divine wisdom guided to his selection for it.

"Mr. Armstrong found it necessary to his purpose, that he should pass several weeks within the bounds of our (Concord) Presbytery; and for the sake of convenience, as affording a central location, he honored us with the privilege of furnishing him a prophet's accommodations of a chamber and a stool which he was kind enough to call his 'home.' Well he might so call it, for his easy though dignified familiarity and kind interest in all the members of the family soon made us feel that he was no *stranger*, while his serious, smiling countenance, his sympathizing eyes, his lively sensibility, warm heart, and engaging manners, would soon make 'home' anywhere, where goodness could be appreciated, and its indications perceived. A large number of young ladies connected with 'The Southern Female Institute' of which I was then in charge, were members of our family; and it will be long, ere I forget the interest which he manifested in their welfare, or the happy impression which his affectionate, serious intercourse made upon their minds.

"At morning and evening worship of the family, he was eminently spiritual and edifying, and never failed to engage the attention of all present. A brief exposition of scripture truth, or the mention of some illustrative and pertinent incident, or a kind but forcible appeal to the conscience in behalf of personal piety, would fix and throw over our thoughts a religious atmosphere preparing us to accompany him up the sacred mount of the Divine Presence, where we might hold sweet converse with God, and gain new convictions of his dreadful holiness and majesty. On one occasion he led us, in our morning devotions, into such a clear, satisfactory, and consolatory view of the Abrahamic Covenant and Christian baptism, especially the baptism of the infants of believers, as I have scarcely ever enjoyed, either before or since. He seemed to bring God sensibly before us, recognising the nature and perpetuity of that covenant, and graciously renewing his pledges to receive now, from his faithful people, their children consecrated to him according to its stipulations, to be his true heritage for ever. We felt that in this delightful privilege and duty of dedicating our children to God by baptism, our feet were on a rock which would neither crumble and decay by the lapse of time, nor melt and vanish when the earth shall be burned up. And although since this scene transpired, of which no memorandum was ever made, more than sixteen years have passed away, yet the remembrance of it, even at this time, is both vivid and refreshing to the heart.

"He was both gentle and condescending. No one among us was so young or so obscure, as to fail to attract a portion of his attention. The child of less than two years was made welcome as a companion; and the servants were kindly advised in relation to their spiritual

welfare, and earnestly borne in his petitions before the mercy seat. Such attentions won a listening ear and kind regards for the missionary cause, as well as the most affectionate respect towards himself. When, therefore, an opportunity was given for contributions to be made, we were not surprised at the presentation of a liberal sum by the young ladies of the family, though that the servants should, without our knowledge, bring in a free-will offering of several dollars, was entirely beyond our expectations, and clearly showed how sincere and deep an interest had been enkindled in their hearts. He often recurred to this incident with manifestations of the liveliest satisfaction.

"The season of the year, selected by Mr. A. for visiting our churches, being that of their regular spring meetings, greatly favored his benevolent enterprise, as it did also his own spiritual enjoyment. It may not be improper to observe here, that in that portion of Carolina, as in some other parts of the south and west, the practice of celebrating the sacrament of the Lord's Supper but twice a year, in the fall and spring, generally prevails. On these occasions, preaching is usually had for several successive days previous to the Sacramental Sabbath, and neighboring ministers are called in to assist the pastor in his labors. The people too, many of whom dwell at the distance of several miles from their place of worship, in order to enjoy these sacred scenes, gather with their families around the sanctuary in the forest, and there abide through 'the last great day of the feast.' In many instances, for their better accommodation, booths or tents are erected in a suitable position near the house of God. These are well covered with weather boards and shingles, and are ordinarily large enough to admit of two or three apartments; so that by good economy of space, fifteen or

twenty of them will afford shelter and tolerable comfort to a large number of persons for so short a period. Thus, hundreds and often thousands of people are brought together from the surrounding country, who enjoy the unfrequent and precious privilege of sitting daily under the droppings of the sanctuary, and feasting upon its spiritual bounties. There, often a new lustre is given to the armor of the Christian soldiery, and new zeal fires their hearts. A fresh unction from the Holy One comes upon the followers of Christ; their love and faith and prayer are kindled anew, and they 'mount up with wings as eagles; run, and are not weary; walk, and are not faint.' There, too, has the Holy Spirit, either as a mighty rushing wind, or as a still small voice, often come down upon the hearts of the unconverted. And oh! what misery and biting anguish of conviction! and then what songs of ecstacy and thanksgiving have we witnessed beneath the shade of those solemn and venerable Carolina forests! Blessed manifestations of the spirit! At the recollection we fall unbidden into the touching strain of Ossian:—

> "The memory of joys that are past is like the
> Music of Caryl, pleasant and mournful to the soul."

May God often repeat and long continue these heavenly visitations to those honored churches.

"As these 'sacramental meetings' were usually so arranged that but one should occur in the same neighborhood on the same Sabbath, it enabled Mr. Armstrong to visit most of the churches on these occasions. This was his delight; and he carried to them a preparation of mind and heart, a spiritual relish and ardor, which rendered his labors at them signally useful. His discourses were not generally of a missionary character,

although he always introduced that subject in some part of the exercises, and took up a contribution for the cause. In his preaching he assumed that animated, living piety, and the missionary spirit, are homogenous; and that the latter is to the former as the telescope to the natural eye. The telescope neither fabricates the eye, nor supersedes its necessity. On the contrary, it would be of no use without that organ. It does not *create* vision, but only lengthens its ken. So the missionary spirit is nothing without piety; it only *leads out* the truly warm and pious heart into wider and more extensive views of Christian enterprise and duty, and engages its prayer and power for the salvation of a benighted world. Could these objects be accomplished, there would be no good cause of apprehension for the welfare of the heathen. Hearts inflamed with divine love spontaneously ask, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' And when the spirit of that inquiry pervades the whole church, the heathen will be efficiently cared for, and the heralds of salvation will bring them home to God. It was his aim, therefore, to display those truths which are fitted to arouse, enliven, edify, and establish the people of God, and to alarm and persuade sinners to flee from the wrath to come. 'His speech and preaching were not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit, and of power.' Ready in the Scriptures, gifted and forcible in his natural powers of logic, sufficiently diversified in style and illustration, naturally eager for his object, and his heart now dilated with the love of God and with concern for sinners, he often poured forth on these occasions torrents of startling truth and impassioned eloquence, which electrified with joy the people of God, and palsied with fear and remorse the hearts of the un-

converted. None who heard him doubted that he was an ambassador for God—

> "'A messenger of grace to guilty man;
> much impressed
> Himself, as conscious of his awful charge,
> And anxious mainly that the flock he [fed]
> [Might] feel it too.'

"The Sabbath scenes of these occasions—especially the manner of administering the sacramental elements—were probably new to our friend, and did not fail to awaken in his mind a lively and most joyful interest. It was, indeed, an imposing spectacle to witness the thousands who were sometimes congregated in those religious forests, orderly arranged, silent, solemn, and attentive to the messages of grace, as was ever a worshipping assembly in a temple 'made by hands.'

"Not only the bright radiance of the sun, and the genial air of heaven, but the life-giving influences of the Holy Spirit also were there freely dispensed; and the bowed head, and glistening eye, and broken heart, and voice of thanksgiving, gave proof that the prayer-hearing God was there, calling the dead to life, and working wonders of salvation for the lost.

"The celebration of the Eucharist comes immediately after the regular morning service. The sacred emblems are not circulated through the congregation as is usually practised in most parts of the country; but those entitled to communicate, as many as conveniently can, after appropriate addresses and prayer, and while a hymn is being sung by the congregation, draw near, and seat themselves at extensive tables which have been previously prepared for the purpose. Here, surrounding these tables, they receive the consecrated emblems, and listen to instructive discourses from the men

of God, or engage in private edifying meditation for a suitable time; and then, while the singing is resumed by the congregation, they withdraw, and are succeeded by others in the same privileges. The tables generally used on these occasions, are temporary fixtures, and long enough to accommodate, on both sides, from sixty to one hundred persons. And yet, so numerous is the attendance at some of these meetings, that they have been known to be successively filled, eight, twelve, or fourteen times, first by the white, and then by the colored people, professing to be the followers of the blessed Jesus. As they come forward from different parts of the assembly to participate in the joyful privilege, how interesting and affectionate is the scene! Some, with alacrity and humble joy, move to the sacred shrine; others impenitently linger in their seats, having no part nor lot in the matter. What solemnity and melting impressiveness must there be, to a devout mind, in witnessing such a spectacle. How naturally will it suggest to him, that next more solemn and fearful scene which it so much resembles, when before the Son of Man, on the throne of his glory, shall be 'gathered all nations, and he shall separate them, one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.'

"Mr. Armstrong had not the heart to be unmoved by these transactions. He looked upon them, not as many, with the indifference of the stoic, nor as many others, who idly gaze upon them as an entertaining, though unmeaning, melo-drama, but with the sincere and earnest faith of him who believes the record that God has given of his Son. He saw there the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. Before him was a visible manifestation that 'God so loved the

world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' His eye affected his heart; and his heart, moved by sympathy and love, and yearning towards the impenitent around him, melted into liquid thought, and gushed forth in the most fervid and earnest strains of appeal and entreaty.

"'Vehemens et liquidus puroque simillimus amni.'

"These, we have good reason to believe, were to him seasons of rare communion with God, and of spiritual enjoyment. As such, he often, in after years, adverted to them, and spoke with animation and pleasure of their hallowed and happy influence. Nor was the experience of the brethren of Presbytery, and of Christian people generally, at variance with his own in this respect. Coming, as he did, from the companionship of the lamented Wisner, and other kindred spirits, and upon an embassy which would naturally lead a pious soul into frequent fellowship with God, he brought among us a tenderness and depth of devotional feeling which so flavored his preaching, and, indeed, all his intercourse with us, that others could scarcely fail to imbibe the happy influence. His visits to our churches, therefore, instead of being shunned, as those of agents have sometimes been, were earnestly coveted by the pastors, and were anticipated as occasions of hope, of effort, and of prayer, for a blessing from on high, as they often proved. Thus, not only was he eminently successful in the special object of his mission—collecting liberal contributions, and imparting a healthy missionary tone to our churches—but by wisely making his efforts fall in, and harmonize with, those of the ministry, he became a valued auxiliary in their work,

and often an almoner of prompt and special blessings to the people. Many of the humble children of God, in those churches, would yet, I doubt not, experience lively pulsations of delight at the mention of his name, and be ready to say, as the two disciples did of their Lord, 'Did not our heart burn within us while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures, and communed with us in breaking of bread?'

"But no more such seasons shall they ever enjoy with him in the flesh; though with him and with their Lord, in his kingdom, they may hereafter more joyfully drink the wine *new*. Thither, with believing hope, we turn our eyes. 'In my Father's house are many mansions: I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also.' Such is the glorious destiny of the saints; and when the gracious Saviour comes to fulfil his promise, little does it matter whether we ascend corporally, like Elijah, in a chariot of fire, or whether, like our honored and lamented brother, we shake off our dust in the billowing surges of the deep, and wing our way, unseen by mortal eyes, to the ever-bright, ever-blessed home of the good. There, we joyfully believe, this servant of God has been welcomed to repose. Happy in the retrospection of his toils and labors in the cause of his divine Lord; happy in his *works which have followed him*, and which will continue to follow him for long ages to come, in the form of souls redeemed and saved by his honored instrumentality; happy in the spreading triumphs of the cross, in the wonders and glories of redemption, in the resplendent visions of immortality ever bursting on his enraptured eye; and above all, happy in the uninterrupted and unalloyed fruition of

the infinite Trinity; there he has attained, and fully realized, the grand consummation and chief end of human existence—'TO GLORIFY GOD AND ENJOY HIM FOR EVER.' In answer to his many devout and earnest prayers, may a thousand blessings descend upon the church, and thousands of thousands upon the Pagan world to the end of time.

"Yours fraternally,

"A. J. LEAVENWORTH.

"Petersburgh, Va., Jan. 17th, 1852."

In reviewing the reminiscences which we have been able to collect of this truly excellent man, the following impressions are spontaneously forced upon our mind:—

I. That Dr. Armstrong was eminently an *evangelical* man. In his temper of mind, in his every day life and conversation, he was eminently evangelical. Find him where you would, and he was a missionary. His work was one. He was a minister of the New Testament. He was always about his Father's business. Not only did he preach the great and distinguishing doctrines of the cross, but his life was a beautiful illustration of these doctrines. He did the work of an evangelist, first, as sent out by the General Assembly's Board of Missions to Virginia, then at Trenton and Richmond, where, as pastor, his labors and public teachings were peculiarly seasoned with the salt of the missionary spirit. And such, too, was the character of his whole public ministry and of his Christian life. He commenced his public ministry, as we have seen, as a missionary in Virginia. He there early became known as the friend of the colored people. "To the poor the gospel is preached." And well did he verify, in his ministry, this delightful characteristic of the great

scheme of human salvation. Wherever he preached, he fulfilled the same evangelical mission. "While preaching as a missionary in Albemarle," writes a friend, "Mr. Armstrong was much interested in the welfare of *slaves*. A traveller, passing a grove, heard the voice of earnest supplication. It was the young missionary pouring out his soul in prayer for the salvation of the African race. To them he often preached, and from them he had many seals of his ministry."

Of few men may it be so truly said that CHRIST was in all his preaching. The *subjects* of his sermons were all of this character—all tending to edify and comfort the saint, and to convert the sinner; all indicating a remarkable singleness of purpose in the whole course of his ministry. If a pastor, it was to preach Christ, and from house to house to urge the claims of Christ on the attention of the perishing sinner. If a missionary, it was to preach Christ where he was not known, and to establish churches where Satan's seat is. If an agent of benevolence, it was to urge the claims of Christ on his church, that she should send his ever blessed gospel to the ends of the earth. If in the social circle, in the family, in the prayer meeting or in the closet, by the wayside, in public or in private, he had but one theme. In the best sense of the term, he was a man of one idea. True as the needle to the pole, he was the missionary, preaching Christ, and him crucified. He was truly a minister of the New Testament. His whole life was beautifully imbued with a living evangelism.

II. Dr. Armstrong was *a man of prayer*. He was much in his closet. We have spoken of his habits of secret prayer in his place of business. Though so engrossed, as he necessarily was, in the business of an onerous office, nothing closed his doors against the calls of his friends, and the friends of missions, but his com-

munings with his God. "Much of his work," as a friend recently remarked who had often waited for admission at his door till he had finished his supplications, —the bedewed cheek and the air of devotion clearly indicating the nature of his engagement,—"*much of his work was prayer.*" Here lay his great strength. He was mighty in his work, because he was a man of prayer. He wrestled with Jacob's God; and in the strength of Israel's God he went on in his work.

In his *secret* devotions he put on his armor, and girded himself for his work. Here was the hiding and the fountain of his strength. But there was, in relation to his habits of prayer, another remarkable feature observed while in the *execution* of his work. We here refer to his *public prayers.* Thousands will at once recall those prayers, and the deep, delightful, lasting impression made by them. There was a *moral power* in his prayers seldom witnessed elsewhere. When he conducted the devotions of an assemblage in the sanctuary, there was a melting down of the spirit, a kindling of the soul, a sense of the Divine presence; there was a feeling of solemnity, of awe, of reverence, pervading the worshipping assemblage; a feeling that he who was speaking to God had entered within the veil, and was talking with God, face to face. There was eloquence, there was sublimity; yet not in words, except in the dialect of child-like simplicity; not in thoughts, except in such as brought the great Jehovah near—as made death, judgment, heaven, hell, awful realities—as made the soul feel, how dreadful is this place! this is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.

There was an unction in his prayers; a confiding of the spirit in God; a nearness of access to the Father of all mercies; an expression of strong faith; the evi-

dence of hope, and the strong crying of earnest supplication, which will long be remembered by those who heard him. It was the power of prayer that gave such weight to the truths which he afterwards uttered, or the facts he stated, or the claims of a dying world which he urged. He was mighty through God. Hence,

III. *His power in the pulpit.* We believe it will be readily conceded that Dr. A. exercised a power in the pulpit which falls to the lot of only a favored few. As you heard him preach, you might not have pronounced him a great preacher, or eloquent; yet, in a very important sense, he was both. If he be a great preacher who, in an uncommon degree, secures the great end of preaching; who brings forth such thoughts, and so arranges them, as most effectually to impress, convince, and persuade; if he be a great preacher who so *delivers* his sermons as eminently to gain the great end for which he preaches, we may claim for Dr. Armstrong this enviable distinction. He was, in this better sense of the term, a great preacher. His greatness consisted in a beautiful imitation of his Divine Master. His words had power, because they were baptized in the Holy Ghost. His eloquence was fervid, effective, often overpowering: because he spake from a warm heart the burning truths of the everlasting Gospel. He possessed a power in the pulpit which few attain to. Yet it was not the power of words, not the power of great and fresh thoughts; it was the pathos of a baptized soul. It was the glowing ardor of one who stood between the living and the dead; before whom eternal realities were in full view; who preached in sight of judgment; above whom heaven smiled, and who heard the groanings of the prisoners beneath, and saw the smoke of their torment ascend. There was in his preaching no theory, no speculation, no tricks to please

the ear or fascinate the imagination; all was practical, all real. It was this vitality, this appearance of reality, this life and death aspect of the things he set forth, which gave him his power. Herein his great strength lay. Shorn of these locks, he would have been weak as any man. Suspend his communings with heaven; cut the golden pipe that continually conveyed the oil to his lamp from the living Olive Tree; take away that holy pathos which he brought with him from behind the veil; let him dwell on other themes than those which pertain to the reality of the life and death set forth in the Gospel, and you have disrobed him of his great strength.

Much of what has now been said was true only of the *living preacher*. It will not all be found in his written sermons. The warmth of his feelings often furnished him with thoughts at the moment which might characterize a whole sermon, but which do not appear on the page. As applicable to the living preacher, we believe, our remarks will meet a cordial response from thousands who heard him.

IV. Finally, Dr. Armstrong was characterized by *an impartial, diffusive benevolence*. Of few men could it be more truly said, *he loved everybody;* that he was unselfish, kind, obliging, self-sacrificing for the good of others. All who knew him, took knowledge of him that he had been with Jesus; that he had there been instructed in the "new commandment." Whether in the family or in the social circle, or in the performance of official duty, his whole demeanor was pervaded by benevolent feeling. He was the John among the disciples—a living personification of that charity which suffereth long and is kind, envieth not, vaunteth not itself, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things. His life was a

pleasing commentary on the gospel he loved to preach. It was a living illustration of love. He loved the souls of his fellow men. He was willing to spend and be spent for their salvation. For this end he labored untiringly, for this end he contributed liberally as the Lord prospered him. While living, he was a blessing to many; in his death, he was the ready and honored instrument of bringing consolation and warning to them who were, at that crisis, so suddenly and unexpectedly hurried away to the bar of God; and a sweet savor perfumes his memory, as his happy spirit reposes in the bosom of his God.

He rests from his labors, but he is not unmindful of the work which he so much loved while living. He is among that cloud of witnesses who watch with the intensest interest the progress of the work of human redemption. With him all now is reality; judgment, eternity, heaven, hell, are all awful realities. The immortal soul—its destiny, its apostasy, its salvation through the atonement of a crucified Saviour, or its utter and final ruin—oh, what awful realities now! And with what angelic earnestness, in what seraphic tones, does he now bid his fellow laborers, who still remain as co-workers with God below, to use all diligence, to employ all their activities to save, if it be but one soul, from the undying death.

He has finished his course; he has gone to his rest; he has left behind him an example worthy of imitation. We thank God for such trophies of his grace; for such illustrations of what his love and his power can do in changing the plants of a strange vine into lovely trees of righteousness, and planting these in the house of the Lord. We thank God for these demonstrations of his power, these attestations of his covenant faithfulness. We see what he can, what he does, and what he will

do. He will fulfil his promises; he will carry out his purposes of mercy towards ruined man; he will of these stones raise up children to Abraham. He will accept the labors of his servants; if we honor him in an honest consecration of ourselves to his service, he will honor us by receiving us as coadjutors with himself in carrying out his plans of mercy towards our world. Surely, then, the life of the good man is a legacy to posterity. We will receive it as a goodly heritage. May we imitate his virtues, and follow him as he followed Christ; and, with grateful hearts to Him who has given us another such example of his love to man, respond:

Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, AND THEIR WORKS DO FOLLOW THEM.

Sermons.

Sermons.

SERMON I.

THE DEATH OF THE SAINT.

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints."—Psalm cxvi. 15.

God has a people among men. Wherever he sends his Gospel, he makes it his power and his wisdom to the salvation of some. Their outward circumstances are various. They are known by different names and denominations. Ignorance and prejudice often prevent them from recognising each other; but, in the omniscient eye, they are all a peculiar people, called out from the world and separated from it by a difference wide, essential, and permanent. They have received the Gospel, not as the word of man, but, as it is in truth, the word of God. And it has wrought in them, effectually, conviction of sin and conversion to holiness. It has made them humble penitents toward God, and cordial believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. It has taught them to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, and righteously, and godly in the world; to renounce the world as a portion, and to lay up their treasure in heaven; to look not at the things that are seen and temporal, but at those things that are unseen and eternal; to endure as seeing him who is invisible; not as pleasing men, but God who searcheth the heart.

They are born again by the Word of God which liveth and abideth for ever. They are the workmanship of God, the Holy Spirit, created in Christ Jesus unto good works. They are dead to the world, to its maxims, fashions, and pleasures, to their own former pursuits, to the principles by which they were once governed, the hopes they cherished, the joys in which they delighted. Their life, as to its source, its principles, its end, is hid with Christ in God. Christ is their life; his merits and intercession are the foundation of their hope; his law is their rule of conduct; his example, their pattern; his grace, the source of their daily strength; his love, their animating motive; his glory, the object at which they aim; perfect conformity to him, and intimate and everlasting communion with him, the consummation of all their desires and hopes.

These are some of the distinguishing traits of character by which, according to the bible, the saints of the Lord are marked as a peculiar people. Their development is more or less full and distinct in their present imperfect state; and they stand out to the observation of the world in a manner more or less prominent and palpable. But they exist in every child of God, and they divide the righteous from the wicked by a broad line of demarcation, which all shall one day discern and acknowledge. As they differ essentially in character from all others, so do they in condition.

Having obeyed the Divine command—Come out from the world, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing—they experience the fulfilment of the promise: I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. They are all the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ; and if children then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. For a season they may be in heaviness,

through manifold temptations; but it is, that the trial of their faith, more precious than that of gold, may be found unto praise and honor and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ, whom, not having seen, they love. The world knoweth them not, even as it knew not him. In the world they may have tribulation, as their Redeemer had; but as he overcame, so shall they overcome; and when he shall appear, they shall be like him, for they shall see him as he is. They have redemption through the blood of Christ, even the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; and being justified by faith, they have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Not only so, they glory in tribulation also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and their hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto them.

Having God as their Father, and united to the Lord Jesus as the branch to the vine, or as the members of the body to the head, all things are theirs so far as is conducive to their eternal good; all the dispensations of Divine Providence are adapted to train them up for perfect holiness and happiness; all the provisions and promises of the Gospel are designed to make them partakers of the Divine nature; all the means of grace, and the accompanying influences of the Spirit, are instituted and bestowed, to impart unfailing efficacy to those provisions and promises. Every stage and step of their earthly pilgrimage is ordered by infinite wisdom and love. Their present light afflictions work out for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. And death is theirs; its bitterness is taken away, its poison is extracted, its sting is drawn; and the same parental kindness which guides and guards them through

the perplexities and toils and sorrows of life, presides over its closing scene, arranges all its circumstances, and, accomplishing in it important purposes, causes it to redound to his glory and to their everlasting good. This, I suppose, is the meaning of the expression in the text: "The death of the saints is precious in the sight of the Lord." It is not an event unforeseen, or overlooked, or uncontrolled by him. It has its own place, from the beginning, in the purposes of his everlasting love. It is one of the stages through which he conducts them to that fulness of joy which is in his presence, to those pleasures which are at his right hand for evermore. He selects the time and place, and appoints all the circumstances of their removal. All its consequences to themselves and to others are foreseen and chosen by him; and in the morning of the resurrection, when their salvation is complete, they shall look back upon their passage through the dark valley of the shadow of death, as well as upon their journey through this mortal life, and their temporary abode in the intermediate state, and exclaim with wonder, gratitude, and love, what hath God wrought! Eternal praises to his name, He hath done all things well. The Providence of God is administered by general laws. To the view of man all things come alike to all; there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked. They bow to the same unchanging decree, "Dust thou art, and to the dust thou shalt return." By lingering or violent disease, by gradual decay or sudden disaster, the mysterious tie that binds the spirit to its earthly companion is severed. The body, cold, motionless, senseless, is committed to the dark and silent tomb. The thinking, active, conscious being that once animated it, and through it held communion with living men, passes at once beyond our range of observation. We follow our

fellow being to the very brink of the precipice; we mark his emotions; we sympathize with them in the very article of dissolution. But in a moment all the ties that bound him to us are severed; all intercourse ceases; all communion is at an end. No mortal hand may lift the veil that hides him from our view, no mortal eye may penetrate the darkness that rests upon his onward career through the untried futurity. We dwell for a little with a melancholy interest upon the circumstances of his departure from us; we miss him for a few days from his wonted places of resort; but other objects engage our attention, other persons fill the vacancy which he has left, and soon he is forgotten. Thus it is with the righteous and the wicked, with him that feareth God, and him that feareth him not. But when we look at this event in the light of that lamp which God has let down from Heaven, when we view it as it is presented to us by him who came out from the bosom of the Father to teach us our duty and our destiny, and to reveal for our admonition and guidance the secrets of eternity, how wide, how important, the difference! "The wicked is driven away in his wickedness, but the righteous hath hope in his death." To the one, death is the dread arrest of divine justice, summoning the impenitent transgressor away from the probationary state, where he has abused the long suffering of his God, neglected the great end of his existence, squandered his time, his talents, and his opportunities to gratify his selfish passions, perverted the very mercies he enjoyed as an occasion of greater sin, filled up the measure of his iniquities, and sealed his own condemnation—summoning him away to the bar of a righteous Judge to have his whole character, all his conduct and his motives, pass under the scrutiny of omniscient holiness and to receive a just recompense of reward,—

by which he shall reap the harvest he has sown, and for ever eat of the fruit of his own doings and be filled with his own devices. To the other, death is a welcome messenger sent to announce the period of his toils, and temptations, and sorrows; to remove him from a world where he has lived a pilgrim and a stranger; to release him from a body of sin and death, and conduct him far from weakness, frailty, and imperfection, to his Father's house, to the bosom of his Redeemer, to the society of his brethren, where every holy desire shall be filled, every devout aspiration satisfied, every pious hope realized, and his thirsty soul shall drink of the river of God's pleasures and bathe in an ocean of bliss. To the one, the hour of dissolution is a final separation from all that he has loved, or sought, or known; from all that had diverted his attention from his own guilt and folly in disobeying God and neglecting his soul; all that had restrained his selfish appetites and passions from raging with unbridled fury, all that had lulled conscience into delusive slumbers or rendered him callous to its reproaches; it is his removal to a world, where he has laid up no treasure, for which he has made no preparation, to which he has looked forward only with anxious doubt, or dark and gloomy forebodings, and in which he has no friend, no hope, no portion. To the other, it is a desired and expected removal from weariness, sin, and trouble, to scenes, employments, and joys long sought after with eager hope and ardent effort, for which he has been ripened by a diligent use of all the means of grace, a conscientious obedience to the whole will of God, a sanctified improvement of every dispensation of divine providence; and by the cherished and powerful operations of the Holy Spirit, transforming him into the likeness of Christ and thus sealing him for the day of redemption, and giving him the earnest of

eternal life. To both, death is the commissioned agent of the King of kings, executing his pleasure in the way and at the time which he appoints; but to the wicked, that Almighty Being is an offended sovereign, arresting the stubborn rebel in the very act of lifting the weapons of rebellion against his throne; a slighted Saviour, summoning the despisers of his grace and love to a strict account. To the righteous, a reconciled God and Father calling his children to the embraces of parental love; a Redeemer, affectionately trusted and obeyed, gathering in those whom he has ransomed by his blood to the mansions he has prepared for them, that they may be everlasting monuments of his mighty power and abounding grace. Precious is their death in his sight. He orders all its circumstances; he leaves them not unaided in their struggle with the last enemy. In their nature he has himself encountered and overcome the king of terrors, and he knows how to sympathize, to soothe, to sustain, to give the victory. Into the abode of separate spirits he has gone before them, and there will he show them the path of life. The grave he has consecrated as a resting place for his people; and as he burst the bars of death and ascended up on high, he led captivity captive and entered into his glory, so shall his voice ere long waken their sleeping dust, breathe into their decayed frames immortal life, pour upon them a vigor and a beauty like his own, and, reuniting the pure spirit to its glorified companion, rise with them to his Father and their Father, and his God and their God. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints, yea blessed are the dead that die in the Lord." Whether, like aged Jacob, they calmly meet the king of terrors, surrounded by weeping friends, and soothed by every expression of filial love, or, like Lazarus, are borne by angels to Abraham's bosom from the cheerless home

of want where none were present to sympathize or to pay the last offices of kindness, or like the first martyr, sink under the hand of violence and pass from the circle of enraged enemies, breathing out threatenings and slaughter, to the immediate presence of their glorious Redeemer and the triumphant songs of the upper sanctuary; their death is precious in his sight who hath redeemed them unto himself by his own blood. Whatever in its circumstances may seem mysterious to surviving friends, is all plain and clear to them in the light of that world where they now rejoice. We have abundant reason to believe that such as I have described was the character of that respected member of this Church, whose sudden removal from us we are called to consider and improve to-day, and whose mortal remains are now before us to be borne for the last time from this house of God, where he so often worshipped with delight, to that dark and silent mansion where they will slumber till the morning of the resurrection.

SERMON II.

THE LOVE OF CHRIST A CONSTRAINING MOTIVE IN THE MISSIONARY WORK.

"For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead."—2 Cor. v. 14.

Two things are remarkable in the early history of Christianity: the extent and power of the missionary spirit in the primitive church, and the blessing of God crowning missionary effort with signal success.

The first Christians were a feeble band. They were few in number; without wealth, without learning, without influence, or earthly resources of any kind. When they began to propagate the Gospel, the world had bowed down for ages under the iron yoke of error and superstition. Never was an enterprise more arduous or perilous, or to the eye of reason hopeless of success, than the work of publishing everywhere the glad tidings, as it was undertaken by them. From the city where their Master had just suffered an infamous death, a despised and feeble company of his followers went forth to persuade the world to honor him as their Redeemer, Sovereign, and Judge. Into this work, apparently so hopeless, they entered with an ardor, a constancy, a perseverance, a purpose, and a confidence of success, never surpassed.

And such was the Divine blessing on their labors, that ere one generation had passed away, it is written of them: "Their line is gone out into all the earth, and their words to the end of the world." And while they were everywhere reviled, and scorned, and persecuted,

and their path was marked by their tears and blood, and illumined by the fires of martyrdom, the cause for which they toiled and suffered held on its way, waxing stronger and stronger, till it triumphed over all opposition, and from the throne of imperial Rome received the homage of the civilized world.

In the text, one of the early heralds of the cross—himself not a whit behind the very chiefest in labors, and sufferings, and successes—tells us what principle animated him and his brethren in this arduous, blessed work: "The love of Christ constraineth us."

The meaning of this declaration is the same whether we interpret the phrase "the love of Christ," as our love to Christ or Christ's love to us; if the first, our love to Christ springs from his love to us, and is sustained and animated by it; if the last, Christ's love to us operates as a practical principle by producing in us love to him.

Whether we be beside ourselves, as some assert, says the apostle, it is to God; or whether we be sober it is for your cause; for we thus judge, &c., &c.

The phrase by which he describes the influence of the love of Christ is very emphatic; it constraineth us; literally, it surrounds us, and presses us on every side, so that we cannot escape from it. It bears us along, like a mighty torrent, with resistless power; through toils and trials, through sacrifices and sufferings, and death itself, we are borne onward by our love to him who died for us.

When those disciples thought of Christ's love to them, so free, so strong, so precious in its fruits—when their hearts were opened to the blessed influences of that love—it awakened feelings of gratitude and esteem, and ardent desires to please and honor him who thus loved them and gave himself for them. It called forth in their hearts a love to Christ, stronger than the love of ease,

or the love of wealth, or of reputation, or of friends, or of life itself. Cheerfully they put all these at hazard for his sake; joyfully they sacrificed them all when the honor of his name and the promotion of his cause called for the offering.

Such is the nature of all genuine love to Christ. In proportion as it is sincere and enlightened, it is steady and practical; it is supreme and transcendent; it subdues everything in the believer himself to its own sway; it determines the end for which he lives, and marks out the path he pursues, no matter what difficulties may beset that path. Thus it wrought in the primitive church, as the great principle of missionary effort, prompting to every toil, and sacrifice, and suffering, necessary in bearing to all people the glad tidings of great joy.

Thus the love of Christ will ever operate as a missionary principle, in proportion as the great work of publishing the gospel to every creature is presented to those who love him, as a work to be done, by the blessing of God upon their efforts and in answer to their prayers.

Let us consider this topic—Love to Christ—as the animating motive to missionary effort.

It is so, first, as it is a *principle of obedience.* The believer has chosen Christ as his Master and Lord; he bows in willing subjection to his blessed authority; but love to a master always delights in obedience to his authority; so Christ says: "If ye love me keep my commandments;" "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me."

He commanded his people, Go preach my Gospel to every creature; go make disciples of all nations. This was his last command, his parting injunction as he ascended to Heaven. He uttered it in immediate con-

nexion with the assertion of his majesty and glory as mediator: All power is given to me, &c.; Therefore go, &c., as if he meant his people to regard it as the grand test of their loyalty to him. He annexed to it the promise of his gracious presence in every age: Go make disciples, &c., and, Lo! I am with you always, &c., as if it were his purpose to identify it with all the most precious privileges of his people, and all their dearest hopes. He gave the command, after he had borne their sins in his own body on the cross, that they being dead unto sin might live unto God, and in full view of all the toil, and self-denial, and suffering it would cost his people to obey it. Primitive believers seem to have entered into his views; they sympathized in his feelings; whether they thought of him as dying for their sins, or rising again for their justification; or ascending on high and entering into heaven as their advocate and representative; or seated on his throne, to give efficiency to the purposes of love for which he died. Every view of Christ was associated in their minds with the command, Go preach my Gospel to every creature. In proportion as they loved him, and rejoiced in him, they counted it a duty and a privilege to live unto him, for the great purpose for which he had redeemed them unto God by his blood. Love to their Master animated every effort, prompted every act of self-denial, made sacrifices easy and sufferings sweet, and suffered them not to rest till his last command was fully executed, and "Earth's remotest nation had heard Messiah's name."

Again, Love to Christ wrought in the primitive Christians as a missionary principle, as it filled them with ardent desires to please and honor him.

When they meditated on his love to them; on the mire from which he had redeemed them by his sufferings in their stead; on the blessed privileges and hopes

so dearly purchased and so freely bestowed on them; when they looked up to Heaven and beheld him entering there as their forerunner, ever living to intercede for them; when they anticipated his second coming, in the glories of his Godhead, to be glorified in his saints and admired in all them that believe in him, how could they refrain from asking in the fervor of grateful love, Lord, what wilt thou have us to do? How may we express our gratitude to thee? How may we show forth thy praise? How may we please and honor thee, oh, thou who wast slain?

With such feelings of grateful love to Christ they looked around them, and saw his inheritance in the hands of his enemies; the god of this world trampling upon his rights; triumphing in the usurpation and robbery of his purchased possession; they saw his name, and grace, and power, unknown; or if known, dishonored and despised; souls for whom he died, led captive by the devil at his will, going down under the bondage of error and sin to everlasting woe; and they burned with holy zeal to vindicate their Master's honor and assert his rights.

They knew that he was honored by the publication of his Gospel; that by this rod of his strength he subdued the proud and stubborn heart, and reigned in the midst of his enemies; they knew that every triumph of his grace, no matter how obscure and degraded the subject, gave new joy to his benevolent heart, and to the holy choirs that surround him, a new theme of praise; they knew that every redeemed sinner would stand up before the holy universe a monument of his love, and add a new gem to his diadem of glory.

When they thought of this and of Christ's love to them, they longed to publish everywhere his sufferings, his resurrection, and his glory; to tell to all the world

his love, and grace, and power to save. They thought no labors arduous, no sacrifices great, no sufferings severe, by which they might magnify his grace and win immortal souls to him. No region seemed remote, or dark, or perilous, where they might show forth the riches of his grace and gather jewels for his crown. Time, talents, influence, property, life itself, they counted not dear, if by these they might please and honor him. For this they encountered cold and hunger and nakedness; they shrank not from perils by land and perils by sea; they quailed not at the terror of martyrdom.

Again, love to Christ wrought in the primitive Christians as a missionary principle, as it led them to desire to be like him and to enjoy communion with him.

In him, they saw the perfection of moral beauty, and they longed to bear his image. They esteemed him the chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely, and they were filled with intense desires to be like him, to breathe his spirit, and walk in his steps, and thus be fitted for communion with him on earth, and for blissful and everlasting fellowship with Christ in Heaven.

But in labors, and prayers, and sacrifices, and sufferings for the promulgation of his gospel and the salvation of men; in these things they were walking in his steps, seeking the very objects for which he toiled and died, and by means such as he used! Thus they entered into his plans, they sympathized in his purposes and feelings of love and mercy, they became identified with him. How it sweetened toil and privation and suffering in this work, to recollect that he whom their souls loved, had thus wrought in the same work before them. Did they devote property to this object, selling houses and lands, and distributing with a liberal hand, when there was occasion for it?—He had given all his riches, and made himself poor for the same object! Did they give

to the work time, and thought, and patient labor?—It occupied his thoughts, and filled his heart, and absorbed all his mighty energies! Did they encounter opposition, and bitter scorn, and hazard life in the work?—He had borne the contradiction of sinners against himself, and endured the cross, despising the shame, for the same blessed end. No matter how rough and toilsome the path of the heralds of salvation, their master had been there before them. There he had left his footprints to guide and to cheer them, and love delighted to follow him, and found a charm in sacrifices and sufferings, by which it was conformed to a suffering Saviour, and filled up what was behind of his afflictions in their flesh, for his body's sake, the Church.

Thus love to Christ wrought in his primitive disciples as the animating principle of missionary effort, constraining them to every labor, and sacrifice, and self-denial by which they might obey his last command, please and honor him who had bought them with his own blood, and cultivate a holy and blessed fellowship with him, in the very purpose and work of mercy, for which he laid down his life.

Love to the Redeemer was the mighty principle, under whose sweetly constraining power that little band went forth to subdue the world to their crucified master, or to expend the last particle of their strength and treasure, and pour out the last drop of their blood in the effort; and his presence went with them, and his promised blessing rested on their labors, and nation after nation, buried for ages in error, pollution, and misery, awoke at the life-giving call from the long slumbers of spiritual death, and casting off its grave-clothes, put on robes of light and purity and joy.

We may learn from this subject, 1st: The missionary character of true religion.

Love to Christ is the soul of piety in every pardoned sinner. It is first among the fruits of the Spirit. Common to all of every name and in every place, who have tasted that the Lord is gracious. Preeminent among the Christian graces, it imparts beauty and value to them all; it will endure and increase when faith is lost in vision, and hope swallowed up in enjoyment. "Whoso loveth, is born of God and knoweth God;" but if any man loveth not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha. And this love is the animating principle of missionary effort. In its earliest, purest, steadiest impulses, it prompts the believer to do what he can to make known that Saviour who is precious to his own heart, that salvation in which he rejoices. There is the perennial fountain of toil and sacrifice and self-denial in spreading the Gospel through the world. It cannot fail, while the love of Christ dwells in the hearts of his people, nor while the Eternal Spirit performs his official work, shedding abroad that love in the hearts of pardoned sinners. Once this principle triumphed over all opposition, and undismayed by the terrors of martyrdom, published salvation by the blood of Christ, where Satan had reigned unmolested through centuries of darkness, and had set in array against the gospel, the embattled hosts of earth and hell, and it is still the same in its heavenly origin, in its practical influence, in all its appropriate fruits.

My brethren, is this the character of your religion? Does love to Christ constrain you as it did his primitive disciples, to labor for the promotion of his cause, in obedience to his last command; as an expression of your gratitude for his matchless mercies, that you may please and honor him, and that you may thus grow into his likeness, and ripen for everlasting communion with

him, in the house of his Father and your Father, and his God and your God?

2d. We learn what is needed in order to the speedy propagation of the gospel through the world. We have the same gospel to publish which, in primitive times, spread abroad over the world with almost the rapidity of light. It has been committed to us, under the same command to publish it to every creature. We have the same promise of the presence of Christ to go with us when we go forth in obedience to him, the same promise of the Holy Spirit to be given in answer to prayer. In wealth and learning and facilities for travelling, and all the external means of instruction and impression, the resources of the Church now are greater beyond comparison than they were then, and the obstacles to the work in the unevangelized world, are far less formidable. The Providence of God has gone before us in a signal manner, opening a door of entrance to the dark places of the earth; and the movements of his spirit awakening inquiry and a desire for instruction, have been such, that at this hour the Macedonian cry, "Come over and help us," comes up to us in a thousand voices of agony from different and distant portions of the heathen world!

Why is it, then, that we move so tardily? Why did their words go out to the ends of the world in less time than the whole Church we have has already taken to publish the glad tidings to less than a fiftieth part of our perishing fellow men? Why is it that every year twenty millions pass into eternity without God, and having no hope, while we make known the way of salvation to one million? Why is it that even at this tardy rate of publishing the gospel, almost every missionary society in the world is at this hour in advance

of the contributions of the churches, and burdened with a debt?

Ah! my brethren, we lack the animating principle, the moving power, the constraining influence to quicken and rouse to action all the energies of the disciples of Christ in this blessed work, to unite all hearts and hands in publishing salvation to a perishing world.

SERMON III.

A VOICE FROM THE STEAMER ATLANTIC.—THE FIELD WHITE FOR THE HARVEST.*

"Lift up your eyes and look on the fields, for they are white already to harvest."—JOHN iv. 35.

OUR Lord speaks in the text of Samaria. It was then ripe for the successful preaching of the Gospel; it needed but the reaper to enter in and gather fruit unto everlasting life.

As it was then with Samaria, so is it now with *the world*,—the field into which he calls us to enter, and reap, and receive wages, and gather fruit unto everlasting life;—it is white to the harvest.

This truth I wish to illustrate in several particulars, and chiefly by an induction of facts, as they now exist, in the unevangelical world.

And first, The world is open to the entrance of the Gospel.

A few years since it was not so. The first missionaries from our country to the distant heathen, embarked in 1812. For two years they had sought an eligible field of labor to which they might have access; yet when they left their native land, it was like Abraham, not knowing whither they went. They saw two-thirds of the heathen population of the globe crowded together in southeastern Asia, in dense masses, groping their way to the grave and to the judgment without God, having no hope, and they bent their course to the distant shores

* This sermon was rescued from the wreck of the Atlantic steamer.

of British India. But an order of the government commanding them to return in the same vessel that had carried them out, met them as they landed at Calcutta. In vain did they remonstrate, and entreat permission to preach Christ to the idolatrous subjects of a Christian government. They were compelled to separate, and search in distant regions some door of entrance to testify of Jesus, and salvation to the perishing heathen. One of them, through many trials, found a field of labor in the wilds of Burmah; two others, after being repulsed at various points, and having manfully encountered opposition and persecution nearly two years, were barely suffered to commence on the western coast of India the first mission of the American Church among the distant heathen.

Ten years later, when the first missionaries embarked for Western Asia, the undertaking was deemed perilous, and its practicability doubtful. It was hazardous then to speak to a votary of Mohammed of the claims of the Gospel. The first missionary printing establishment, for the benefit of those countries, was planted at Malta, 700 miles distant, and remained there ten years, because it was not thought safe to place it anywhere in the Turkish empire. Twenty years ago a firman from the government forbade the distribution of the Scriptures in that empire, and commanded the seizure of such copies as were already printed.

For the evangelization of China, Morrison labored nearly thirty years; yet he never ventured to enter the empire, nor to be known publicly among the Chinese as a Christian missionary. For a native of that country to profess Christianity, or to read or distribute the Gospel, or even to teach a foreigner the language, was by the law of China a capital offence.

Thus it was in India, and Western Asia, and China,

where dwelt four-fifths of the unevangelized population of the globe thirty years ago!

How is it now? All India is open. The servant of Christ may traverse the land from Cape Comorin to the snowy mountains of the north, from the Indus to the Burrampooter, and preach Christ to 150,000,000 of idolaters, with none to make him afraid. Everywhere the government protects him, and the people treat him with respect. If a thousand heralds of the cross should go out this year, every one might find there an open door, an ample field, a welcome from those already in the work.

Missionary stations and printing establishments are now found in Turkey, and Syria, and Persia. Their books circulate from the Bosphorus to regions beyond the Euphrates, and from the shores of the Black Sea to the borders of Arabia. Groups of converts are found far in the interior, and inquirers after truth at all the centres of business, along the principal thoroughfares, and in many secluded villages. A numerous missionary corps reside at Constantinople under the eye of the Sultan, at the metropolis of the Mohammedan world. They have depôts for the sale of books, numerous native helpers, boarding schools for the young, a seminary for the education of native teachers and preachers, chapels for the public preaching of the Gospel, and not less than twenty religious meetings every week. The city is filled with their doctrines, yet no man is permitted to do them harm. The great principles of religious toleration have been recognised by the rulers of Turkey and Persia, and public edicts have proclaimed that men shall no longer be put to death for changing their religion.

China is open to Christian teachers; their right to profess and propagate their religion is admitted; the

laws that forbade the Chinese to embrace it have been repealed, and the absolute ruler of 350,000,000 of idolaters has declared that the religion of Jesus is good. How wonderful the changes of the last thirty years! Who could have anticipated them! With what rapidity have they followed each other! They have opened a door of entrance for the heralds of salvation to 600,000,000 of unevangelized men. Surely the fields are white to the harvest.

2d. Facilities for conducting missionary operations have greatly increased. Thirty years ago, it was not uncommon for missionaries to be detained many months, waiting for a passage to heathen countries. Now, delays from this cause are rare indeed. Opportunities are ten times as frequent as they were, and this at less expense, and with far better accommodations.

So of correspondence. In the early years of the A. B. C. F. M. this was tedious, irregular, and uncertain. To write to missions beyond the Cape of Good Hope, and receive answers, required from twelve to eighteen months; now fewer weeks are needed, than were months then. Letters have been written to the mission at Bombay in August, and replies received at Boston in November.

So of remittances for the support of missions. Thirty years ago it was necessary to purchase specie, pay freight and insurance, and consign it to an agent at the port, to which the vessel was bound. Thence it was conveyed by routes often difficult and expensive to the mission, to be taken care of and used as needed. The whole process was costly, tedious, uncertain, and hazardous. Losses by fraud or robbery were not uncommon.

Now, the *Treasurer* of the Board drops into the mail a draught on its bankers in London, payable to the

order of a missionary at Bombay, or Madras, or Canton, and the remittance goes to its destination as safely, and surely, and rapidly as a merchant in New Orleans remits to his correspondent in New York. Funds are thus sent, as soon as they are collected, to the remotest stations in the heathen world, and so of other supplies. How much have we gained in this respect! For all purposes of intercourse and influence our missionary brethren, and the heathen among whom they labor, are at our doors. We have but to stretch out our hands and give them the bread of life. We may distribute the Bible, or gather children into schools, or educate a promising youth in a Christian family, or support a native helper as a teacher, or catechist, or colporteur, or evangelist, in Turkey, or India, or China, or the distant isles, as easily as in our own country and at less expense. The same amount of contribution now tells on the great object far more directly and speedily than in former years. God has thus intrusted to us talents, to be occupied for him, in evangelizing the world, such as he never gave to our Fathers nor to any preceding generation, not even to the primitive Church. The fields are white to the harvest.

3d. We have gained the confidence of those whose salvation we seek. Without this we could have little hope of success; nor is it easy to secure it. The heathen are ignorant and wicked, and ignorance and wickedness are ever full of suspicion and slow to confide in strangers who approach them, with fair professions. They have commonly taken their first impressions of Christianity, not from Christian missionaries, but from those who have gone to them for the sake of gain, and to take advantage of their weakness. Hence a sense of injury, and bitter prejudices have combined with

their own wickedness, to shut their hearts against the Gospel.

It was not till after much discussion that the first missionaries to the Sandwich Islands, were permitted to land, and then it was for one year only, and on trial. The second company were joyfully welcomed.

With great difficulty the early missionaries to India prevailed on the people to give them their children to educate. They began with but two or three. More than once, at different stations, vague rumors of evil intentions spread such a panic among the people, that they hastily took away their children. So it was also in Western Asia.

Now, in the Tamil and Mahratta missions, it is not possible to meet the demands of the people for education. Delegations come to them from distant towns and villages, entreating them to establish schools, and offering to build school-houses and aid in the support of teachers. When the missionaries give notice that they are willing to receive additional pupils to their boarding schools and seminaries, scores of applicants press upon them. If their ability to receive pupils were tenfold greater than it is, it would be taxed to the utmost. Not that the heathen love the gospel, or wish their children to become Christians, but they have learned to confide in the ability and integrity and kindness of the missionaries. They know that in their hands, their children will be well taught and kindly cared for.

In the spring of 1845, when the civil war between the Druzes and Maronites of Mount Lebanon was about to commence, individuals of both the contending parties, committed their money and jewelry and other valuable effects, to the missionaries for safe keeping. Large amounts were thus intrusted to them, without

taking receipts or other evidence of the deposit. In the heat of that vindictive and bloody contest, they moved about among the combatants unmolested. Their houses were a place of refuge to hundreds of both parties, and the poor people felt safe in passing through scenes of deadly strife, if they were in train of an unarmed Missionary. These are but specimens of the manner in which our brethren have gained the confidence of the people, whose salvation they seek. And who are these Missionaries? Our agents and representatives, whom we have sent out. Through them, God has given to us, the confidence of our fellow-men in heathen lands.—He has intrusted to us, a precious talent, to be used for his glory, and their everlasting good. Thus the fields are white to the harvest.

Again an impression has been made, almost throughout the heathen world, that their systems of religion are passing away, and that Christianity is destined to supplant them, and to be everywhere triumphant. Various causes have combined to make this impression.

The superiority of Christian nations in arts and arms; the progress of science and literature, detecting and exposing the gross errors embodied in the prevailing systems of false religion; the political decay and downfall of the great Pagan and Mohammedan empires of the old world; the contempt everywhere poured upon idolatry by travellers, commercial agents, and seamen, from Christian countries; the imbecility and dotage of the great systems of false religion, once vigorous and active; the fading splendor of their rites, and the tame and spiritless despondency of their votaries; the loud call so often repeated, in so many lands, by so many voices of Christian missionaries, that men should forsake these vanities and seek the living God —these causes, coinciding with the movements of the

providence and Spirit of God, have made such impressions, as I have stated, on millions of minds not yet so enlightened and convinced as to cast away their idols. And facts passing before them justify those impressions —Boodhism, by the confession of its High Priest, is ready to expire, in the land that gave it birth. Hindooism is denounced as an imposture and a fraud, by Hindoo writers, in the chief cities of India. Secessions from it are now taking place among Brahmins, in the heart of the country, under the government of native princes. The supreme head of the Mohammedan world has publicly renounced a fundamental maxim of the Koran, to which the system owed its early triumphs and its subsequent support, "that religion is to be maintained and propagated by the sword."

The powers of darkness, so long lording it over the vast domain of heathenism, are like the Amorites when their iniquity was full, and Joshua led in the hosts of the Lord, to the land of promise; their defence has departed from them, and panic and dismay have gone forth among them—or like Herod and his Court, when they heard the inquiry of the wise men,—Where is he that is born King of the Jews, for we have seen his star in the East, and are come to worship him, and Herod was troubled and all Jerusalem with him! In this respect, the way of the Lord is prepared. We go forth in his name, to encounter an enemy already struck with panic, and foreboding defeat and ruin. The fields are white.

In the labors *preparatory to the universal diffusion of the Gospel* already performed, we find a fifth illustration of the text.

The Bible has been already translated into the principal languages of the world, and nine tenths of its heathen population might now read in their own tongues

the wonderful works of God. Fifteen languages have been reduced to a written form by our own missionaries, and the germs of all intellectual and moral progress have thus been planted in so many desolate regions. They have translated the Bible into more than twenty, and prepared grammars, and dictionaries, and elementary religious tracts, in as many.

So they have opened schools of various grades, and educated, more or less, many thousands of children and youth, now mingling with their own people. Thus they have taught them the value of education, and created a desire and a demand for it where mind, dark and torpid, had slumbered for ages; so that the people begin to put forth their own energies, and do what they can to obtain it for themselves. In many heathen countries the prejudice against female education, so widely spread and deeply rooted, has been overcome, and the fetters that bound one half the human family in a degrading and miserable slavery to the other, have been severed, and a gigantic obstacle to the elevation of society removed, and a work fairly commenced in India, and Western Asia, and the islands, which, if pursued, must ultimately renovate the whole framework of society, and make the domestic circle what it is in Christian lands—the home of intelligence and mutual respect and kindness, and the nursery of all that adorns and blesses man in this world, and ripens him for heaven. In like manner institutions have been already formed to prepare native teachers and evangelists in heathen countries; and of these, some are already yielding their first fruits for the healing of many, and their number and efficiency are constantly increasing; all this, too, is of a permanent character. The heads that planned, and the hands that began to execute, may slumber in the grave, but the *work* abides, to

aid and encourage all who may yet go forth to the work of the Lord in those lands. One soweth and another reapeth, and lo! the fields are white to the harvest.

A sixth illustration of the text we find in the spirit of inquiry, the expectation of change, and the desire for improvement, so extensively awakened in the unevangelized world. These may be seen, more or less distinctly, almost throughout Asia, on the coast of Africa, and in its dark interior, and among the countless isles that dot the surface of the Pacific and Indian Oceans; all classes participate in them—nominal Christians, Jews, Mohammedans, and Pagans of every form of idolatry and every grade of civilization; in Turkey and Syria, and portions of the Western and Southern coast of Africa, in Western, Southern, and Northern India, and part of the Indo-Chinese countries, they find utterance in earnest demands for instruction, demands that chide our tardy movements in obeying the command of Christ to give his Gospel to every creature. And what means this dissatisfaction with the present, these anticipations of change, this restless longing for some improvement they scarce know what, or whence? Are they not indications of a new era, even now commencing? Look at them through the glass of prophecy, and behold, not transient meteors, flashing a momentary gleam over the sullen surface of night, but the first faint streaks of morning on the dark horizon, summoning the children of light and of the day to bestir themselves so much the more, as they see the day approaching; incipient movements of the life-giving Spirit brooding over the dark mass of ruined mind, and ready to reduce the chaos to order, and cover it with beauty! The fields are white already to harvest.

Let us notice in the last place, as illustrating the text, the seal of God's approbation of missionary effort, in

the saving operations of his grace. What surer indication that the fields are white than the first fruits, already gathered. God gives us this encouragement. Of perhaps a thousand stations, formed by Christians of every name, in every part of the unevangelized world, nine tenths at least have rejoiced in the presence and power of the Holy Ghost, giving life to the dead in sin.

Of our own missionary stations, numbering nearly one hundred, and stretching round the globe, there is scarcely one where the triumphs of divine mercy have not been witnessed opening the eyes of the blind, and turning them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. Seventy-seven churches of converted heathens now contain more than 25,000 members in full communion, and from those churches thousands have already gone, rejoicing to mingle in the fellowship of the just made perfect. There are redeemed sinners of many tribes, and climes, and colors. Catherine Brown and her parents and brothers of the red men of the forest; and Kupiolani, and blind Bartimeus, with hundreds more, from the isles of the Pacific; and the martyred Asaad of the Arab race, with the Armenian Sarkis, and Babajee, once a proud Brahmin in India; and representatives of the treacherous Malay, and the dark tribes of Africa; with Hall, and Newell, and Parsons, and Fisk, and Worcester, and Evarts, and Cornelius, all joining in the song of praise to him who loved them; and welcomed by the church triumphant, and angels round the throne, as first fruits of the great harvest already white, and ere long to be gathered from all nations, and tongues, and people, with joy that will be new in heaven, and songs such as never yet made its arches ring and waked the echoes of eternity.

Already hundreds of native laborers are connected with our own missions, and thousands, with those of *our fellow Christians*, of whom not a few are supported

as teachers, pastors, and evangelists, by native churches, —and their numbers and efficiency are constantly increasing,—and over wide regions, where the chill, dark night of spiritual death has brooded for ages, the Spirit of God breathes upon the valley of dry bones, and as his servants prophesy, behold a noise and a shaking, and the bones come together, bone to his bone, and the sinews and the flesh come upon them, and the skin covers them, and they *live!*

We very imperfectly appreciate the greatness and importance of that work of spiritual renovation that has been advancing, with growing power, for ten years past, among the Armenians of Turkey, till it attracts the eye and moves the heart of Christendom, and it has more recently commenced with signal power among the Nestorians of Persia.

And now what practical inference should we draw from these facts? What should be our spirit and attitude at such a time? Have we not cause to thank God and take courage? Has he not heard our prayers and smiled on our efforts? Is not the Lord on our side? Do not his Providence and Spirit accompany us? yea, go before us in our obedience to his command? Who could have foreseen such results in so short a time, and from such feeble beginnings! If Samuel J. Mills, who, under God, gave the first impulse to this work, and departed to his rest, should now revisit us, what would be his emotions!

We can hardly measure what has been gained, because so much of the work is preparatory, and looks forward to results not yet developed; and because, as the Gospel moves onward, like the leaven, its self-propagating power acts with growing energy, and in an ever widening sphere; and most of all, because it is made efficient by a Divine influence, to be poured out

ere long, according to promise, as floods on the dry grounds. Those who come after us will be more competent than we are to measure the effects of translating the Bible into so many languages, and publishing the glad tidings to so many nations, and letting in the first rays of heavenly light on so many regions of darkness and the shadow of death!

But have we labored in vain, or spent our strength for naught? Have we not ample cause of thanksgiving and praise!

Again: are we not called to go forward in this work with stronger faith, and higher hopes, and larger plans, and a more generous love to Christ and to the souls of men! It is not to be denied or concealed that we are falling behind our work; or rather, the providence and Spirit of God are far outstripping our tardy movements. The growth of the missionary spirit at home has not kept pace, for ten years past, with the success of the missionary work abroad. At this hour the ripened harvest is falling and perishing for want of reapers. God has raised up many helpers among the heathen, or the case had been far worse than it is. Shall we sleep in the time of harvest? or shrink from gathering the fruits of past toil? That were folly and shame indeed. If the fields are white, let us enter in and reap, and receive wages, and gather fruit unto life eternal. The "Breaker" has gone up before us. The pillar of cloud and fire moves onward towards the land of promise. Shall we not follow?

When the valleys are exalted, and the mountains are brought low, and the crooked ways are made straight, and the rough places plain, that the glory of the Lord may be revealed, and all flesh may see it together, shall we not be up and doing, and so much the more as we see the day approaching!

SERMON IV.

CHRIST, THE POWER OF GOD IN THE SALVATION OF MEN.

"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and make disciples of all nations."—MATTHEW xxviii. 18, 19.

THE speaker in the text is the Lord Jesus Christ. He has risen from the dead; he is ready to ascend to the glory which he had with the Father before the world began. It is his last earthly interview with those whom he had chosen to bear his name, and publish his message of mercy. He thus asserts his own dominion and majesty, and gives a commission, extending to the whole world and enduring to the end of time. The power he here claims is of a peculiar character, and conferred upon him for special purposes. He speaks of himself not simply as God, nor yet simply as man, but as the mediator of the new covenant, divinely appointed; and furnished for the work of redemption, and combining Deity and humanity, in his own person. Let us consider the power and glory of Christ as Mediator, and its connection with the command to make disciples of all nations.

The Bible teaches that this power was given to Christ, as the fruit and the reward of his sufferings to make atonement for sin. Being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; *wherefore* God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of *Jesus* every knee *should bow*, of things in heaven and things in earth,

and things under the earth; and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. And again, we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor. It was the prospect of this exaltation, and of the revenue of praise to the blessed God, and holiness and happiness to fallen man, which it insures, that sustained the holy and compassionate Redeemer as he passed through those humiliations and sorrows by which he attained it. For the joy set before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. It was assured to him by the unfailing promise of God, as the reward of his sufferings, and immediately consequent upon his resurrection from the dead.

Now he had drained the cup of sorrow. By his own death he had conquered sin, and death, and hell; from the grave he had risen triumphant; all power was his in Heaven and in earth; the portals of glory were opened before him; he stood at the threshold ready to sit down upon that throne, where he must reign till he hath put all things under his feet.

This power and glory were conferred upon him, that he might execute those plans and purposes of eternal love and mercy, according to which he laid down his life. Him hath God exalted with his right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and the remission of sins. God hath set him far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things, to the Church which is his body, the fulness of him, that filleth all in all. It is as the Redeemer of lost sinners, for their salvation from sin and death; it is as the great head of the Church, for the protection, support,

and consolation of his people, and their ultimate eternal glory and happiness; it is for the destruction of Satan's empire, the recovery of our rebellious world to its allegiance to God, and the univeral and everlasting establishment of the kingdom of righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, that Jesus is exalted as Mediator. These are the special purposes for which all power in Heaven and earth is given to him.

The power conferred upon him for these purposes, reaches all worlds, extends through all time, and embraces all agents and all events so far as they are connected with the welfare of his Church, the salvation of his people, and the complete eternal triumph of his cause. Mute unconscious nature is obedient to his will; all her elements are controlled by him. The providential government of the world is in his hands. He orders the times and the seasons; nations rise and prosper, or decay and perish at his bidding; he guides and shapes at his pleasure, the earthly destinies of men. Good men are willingly subject to his authority, joyfully they coöperate with him in advancing the great purpose for which he is exalted. He has power over the wicked to restrain their enmity and overrule their bitterest opposition for the promotion of his cause, or to subdue their hearts by his grace, and transform them into friends.

Evil spirits are put under his dominion. All their craft, and might, and malice, are subject to his sway. Not a hair's breadth beyond his permission can they go to harass and tempt his people, or to hinder the triumphs of his Gospel.

Angels and principalities and powers in heavenly places, are obedient to him; as ministering spirits they go forth at his bidding to minister to the heirs of salva-

tion, doing his commands, and helping on his work of saving mercy.

It hath pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell, yea in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead *bodily*, not figuratively, or emblematically, or transiently, but really, substantially, permanently. All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, of holiness and consolation, of grace and strength, suited to the wants of those for whom he died, and sufficient to make them meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, are in his hands; there deposited for the good of his people and the advancement of his cause; and by him administered in subserviency to the great ends for which he died, and rose, and reigns.

The Holy Spirit, in the fulness of his enlightening, new creating, and sanctifying influences, is called in the Scriptures the Spirit of Christ, because, in the economy of redemption, he operates according to the will of Christ, making the Gospel of Christ the power of God unto salvation to all them that believe, and dwelling in the Church of Christ, that it may be sanctified and cleansed and presented to him, a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; and that out of it may flow rivers of living waters, making glad the wilderness and the solitary place, and causing the desert to rejoice and blossom as the rose.

He has power over death and the world of Spirits; to him it belongeth to raise up and to put down; to kill and to make alive; he openeth and no man shutteth; he shutteth and no man openeth.

All the resources that Infinite Wisdom sees needful to carry into perfect execution the plans of everlasting love and mercy in the salvation of sinners, the redemption of this world from the ruins of its apostasy, and its complete and final restoration to holiness and happi-

ness, all these are in the hands of Jesus Christ, exalted as he now is to the mediatorial throne, and made head over all things to the church which he has purchased with his own blood; and all this power he will hold and exercise to the end of time, and to the full and everlasting completion of that work of mercy for which he laid down his life. At the grand consummation, his voice shall wake the dead, and gather all the sons of men before the tribunal of eternal judgment; he shall make the final separation of the righteous and the wicked; to Him shall every one of us give account of himself in the great day of trial and decision; his sentence shall consign his impenitent enemies to the prison of despair, and welcome his ransomed people to the mansions of holiness and joy he has prepared for them.

There he will for ever appear in the midst of his redeemed, in his glorified humanity, their elder brother, the first-born from the dead, the author of salvation, the centre of all eyes and all hearts, uniting the world of ransomed sinners to the blessed God by new and peculiar bonds, and the medium through which new and peculiar manifestations of divine glory, and communications of divine blessedness, shall flow out upon them for ever.

Such, briefly and imperfectly, are the majesty and glory of Christ as mediator; such the authority and power, reaching all worlds, extending through all time, and embracing all agents and all events which he claims as given to him, that he may complete the work of redeeming mercy for which he laid down his life; and, therefore, he commissions his servants to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in his name, and teaching them to observe all things whatsoever he has commanded.

Here, in close connexion with the assertion of his own majesty and glory as King of Kings and Lord of Lords; here, in the exercise of that supreme authority which he had won by his toils and sufferings for the glory of God in the salvation of men; here, in his last intercourse with his chosen disciples, he gives to his church the great charter of her privileges and hopes; to the gospel ministry its broad enduring commission; to all who profess to love him, a permanent test of their allegiance and loyalty; and he identifies obedience to this command with all that is most precious to his people in time and eternity, by its connexion with the promise: "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world."

We have here an ample warrant to seek and expect the conversion of the world; the charter of the church covers the whole earth; the commission of the ministry embraces all nations; the great Redeemer contemplates the willing subjection of every creature to his authority; whatever authority he has given to his people to make known his grace to their own households, the very same authority have they to publish his gospel to every creature; whatever warrant they have to seek the salvation of their own families, the very same warrant have they to make disciples of all nations; they are authorized to claim for him every inch of territory on earth, and the love and confidence of every human heart. Such a commission he gave in the last accents that fell from his lips, ere he ascended to heaven; and he had a right to give it; all things are his; by him they are sustained; for him they exist; he is Lord of all, and heir in all things; the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof the world and they that dwell therein; the heathen are his inheritance, the uttermost parts of the earth are his possession; the man of sin, the false prophet, the demon gods that receive the hom-

age of millions, the idols of wood and earth and stone to which they bow down, are usurpers of the rights of Christ, and they must be cast down and utterly demolished; all the forms of infidelity, error, and superstition, that have reigned over the prostrate millions of our race, in pollution, and terror, and blood, through centuries of darkness and sorrow, are thieves and robbers of that which belongs to Christ, that which is *his* by a title that cannot be questioned; his by the purchase of his blood; his by the gift of the Eternal Father, ratified in his resurrection from the dead; his by his exaltation at the right hand of the heavenly majesty; and sentence has gone forth against them; their doom is sealed; they shall be destroyed; to his blood-bought church he has given a commission to assert his right; to claim for him the supreme love and confidence of every creature; to make disciples of all nations. Under this commission they are to go forth, employing all the means he has intrusted to them, relying upon his word of promise for success; asserting his claims to every human heart, and never retiring from the field, never pausing in their onward march till all opposition is subdued, and Jesus Christ is crowned Lord of all.

2d. We see here the obligation which rests on all who have the gospel, to publish it to their fellow men, and to labor for the conversion of the world.

It is Christ himself who summons all who hear his word, to engage in this work. The command is express, it is unequivocal. He has connected it inseparably with the assertion of his power and glory as Mediator, as if he would have us to look upon it as the grand law of his mediatorial kingdom; the decisive test of our allegiance to him as King in Zion; the indispensable condition of our personal interest in the blessings of his *mediation*; to enforce which, he has for ever pledged

all his resources, as Mediator. It binds all who hear it, to submit to his authority and embrace his mercy for themselves; and to do all they can, to bring all men everywhere to the same willing submission and affectionate trust. It puts under requisition for this purpose, all the means adapted to it, according to God's revealed plan, for the conversion of the world; and to the full extent needed for its complete execution. All the time, and treasure, and labor; all the consecrated talent and learning; all the believing prayer and heroic self-denial, to the sacrifice of earthly prospects, and health, and life itself, necessary to the conversion of the world, are, by this command of him who is King in Zion, solemnly claimed for this great work. To reject this claim or by any means to evade it, is virtually to reject his authority as Mediator, nullify the fundamental law of his mediatorial kingdom, and forfeit all title to the blessings of redemption through his blood, and all hope of appearing with him in glory, when he shall appear to be admired in his saints, and glorified in them that believe. It does not, indeed, require all to go forth in person to publish the gospel; but it does require all to hold forth the word of life, by a holy example; by personal effort in the sphere of their personal influence; and, by fervent prayer, affectionate sympathy, and in generous contribution of the means of support and usefulness, to be fellow helpers of those who for his name's sake go forth to preach his gospel to the nations. Thus it reaches the Christian merchant and mechanic, the farmer and the professional man, and the laborer, and the Christian female, in all the varied walks of usefulness where they are called to serve Christ and rejoice in him, as really as it does the Christian pastor, or the missionary of the cross. It lays all under obligations equally imperative and sacred. It is the great law of

the Mediator's kingdom, binding all who profess loyalty to him, as they trust in his mercy and hope for his promised blessedness and glory, to join heart and hand in the blessed work of bringing the whole world to bow to his authority and rejoice in his love. Hear him, O ye, whom he has bought with his own blood; hear him, from his throne of glory, saying to you, "All power is given unto me in Heaven and in earth; go ye therefore and make disciples of all nations!" Has he intrusted to you, anything needed in this work: property, skill in business, talent, learning, influence, power in prayer, your sons, or daughters, or yourself. Hear *him*, once crucified for you, now exalted far above principalities and powers, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named in heaven and earth. *Hear him* calling upon you for the willing consecration of all to him in this blessed work!

Finally, we see in this subject the assurance of ultimate success in the work of converting the nations to God.

That work is vast and arduous. If our trust was in an arm of flesh, we might well despair. No human power and wisdom has ever yet been sufficient to deliver one soul from the bondage of sin, and bring one heart to bow in willing subjection to the Saviour. What hope, then, of the emancipation of six hundred millions from the thraldom of error, superstition, and wickedness, by which they have been oppressed and crushed for ages, by the feeble efforts of a few imperfect Christians! If we went forth to this work in our own strength, our movements might well provoke the mockery and scorn of the malignant spirits who rule over the darkness of this world. But in the name of the Lord of hosts we set up our banners. He who has all power in Heaven *and earth*, has commissioned his people to make disci-

ples of all nations. The shout of a King is in the midst of the hosts of the Lord, as at his command they go forth to publish his Gospel. Yea, the Breaker is gone up before them, and the worm Jacob shall thrash the mountains. No matter though their numbers and resources were far less than they are, and the power of the adversary a thousand fold greater; his power and wisdom are infinite, and they will be the more illustrious in the final triumph, in proportion to the arduousness of the work, and the feebleness of the means. He employs his people in this work, not because he needs their aid, but for their good, as a moral discipline and training, by which they are taught to sympathize with him in the plans and purposes of his love and mercy, and ripened for more intimate and blissful communion and fellowship with him, in time and through eternity. And in proportion as his benevolent desires for their entire consecration to him, and their joy in him are thus accomplished, he will give to their prayerful believing efforts, a power and a success surpassing all they had dared to anticipate or could have imagined. How often already hath his strength been made perfect in weakness, as in the primitive triumph of his gospel. When a few obscure and unlearned Jews began to publish salvation through his blood, in the very city where he had just suffered an ignominious death, and the word went forth through Judea, and Samaria, and Galilee, and thence into Asia Minor and Greece, and Italy, and onward still, till the sound had gone out to the ends of the earth, and in thirty years disciples were multiplied in every part of the known world; and in our own day, what triumphs has the gospel achieved among Pagan tribes, remote from each other, diverse in manners, habits, and disposition, and stamped with every repulsive feature of dark, debasing, fiend-like

depravity. The ferocious cannibal of New Zealand, who made war and murder his pastime, has bowed in sweet submission to the Prince of peace. The obscene and cruel Tahitian and Hawaian have been washed from their pollutions, and put on the likeness of the spotless Lamb. The brutish Hottentot and the stupid Esquimaux have heard the word of Christ, and learned to rejoice in his love and to sing his praises. The vindictive savage has been taught to love his enemies, and to exchange the war-whoop for the song of praise. And at this hour how extensively, through the unevangelized world, has he gone before his people, removing obstacles, breaking down opposition, multiplying facilities, waking up a spirit of inquiry and a desire for instruction, and impressing the mind of men with a conviction that old systems of error and superstition are passing away, and that vast and momentous changes are at hand. But if we had none of these recorded triumphs of his cross to encourage us, no visible indications of the dawn of a brighter day to cheer us, the power and glory of Christ give ample assurance of success. We go forth at his command. His promise cannot fail. The work is his, not ours. While he is on the throne, a Prince, a Saviour, to give repentance and the forgiveness of sins, we cannot labor in vain. No effort, no sacrifice, no prayers for his cause, prompted by obedient love to him, can be lost to that cause, or be forgotten by him at his second coming.

SERMON V.

THE LIVING WATERS.

"But whosoever drinketh of the waters that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life."—JOHN iv. 14.

IT was said of Jesus by a certain class of men, "Never man spake like this man." It was true, not only as to the sublimity and importance of the truths he taught, but also as to the plain and simple, yet forcible manner, of his teaching; his illustrations were drawn from the most common and familiar objects; frequently from objects that were before the eyes of his hearers while they listened to him; hence, though he spoke of spiritual and unseen realities, no teacher was ever so easily understood; the weakest of his hearers was in no danger of mistaking his meaning, if he did but sincerely desire instruction. So in the text. He was now at Jacob's well, near Sychar, or in the Old Testament, Sychem, conversing with a woman who had come to draw water from the well. She was thoughtless, ignorant, and sinful. He designed to teach her that she was a lost sinner; to awaken her desires after salvation, and to reveal himself to her, the all sufficient Saviour of the lost. For this purpose he intimated to her, after she had expressed her surprise at his asking him for water to quench his thirst, that he was able to bestow upon her that which was as important for the life of the soul, as the water she had come to draw was for the body. When her curiosity was thus

excited, he replied to her inquiry, "Whence hast thou this water?" by reasserting more plainly, and in stronger language, what he had just said; as if he had said to her, Your soul has wants as real and as urgent as those sensations of thirst which have brought you to this well to-day; as the waters of this well are suited to the wants of your body, so the blessings which I give are adapted to the necessities of your soul; ask of me and I will bestow that which will satisfy your soul, as this water quenches thirst; more than this, I am ready to do for you; you drink of these waters and are refreshed, but the benefit you receive is temporary and partial; soon you will thirst again, and that body, to whose wants you minister, will speedily decay and die, and return to the dust from which it sprung; but the blessings I give yield permanent satisfaction to the soul; they abide with it, and are in it, the pledge and assurance, yea, the very germ and principle of undecaying immortal life. Hunger and thirst, the two leading, universal sensations, which point men to that which is indispensable to the support of animal life, are the significant emblems by which God, in the bible, often presses upon the attention of men, the necessities of their spiritual, immortal part. And the provisions of his infinite mercy, to save our souls, are shadowed forth by those objects that relieve us when hungry and thirsty. Thus it is written, "Ho! every one that thirsteth;" "I am the bread of life," &c. Gospel blessings are to the needy soul, as bread and water to the famishing body—indispensable, appropriate, nutritious, satisfactory, yea, like wine and milk, eminently grateful and cheering. The life which is sustained and cherished in the body by the one, like the body in which it dwells, is frail and evanescent. The other abides in *the soul*, a principle of action and enjoyment, perma-

nent and deathless like itself. It is bread of life, water of life. If we may distinguish these emblems as specially appropriate to distinct parts of the great salvation, the first shadows forth the atoning sacrifice of the incarnate Son of God; the meritorious cause of every gracious communication from our righteous Sovereign to his rebellious subjects; the only medium of our reconciliation to that God who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity; the sole foundation of every solid hope of pardon and eternal life, that ever relieved the burdened conscience of a sinner, or alleviated his trials in life, or dispelled his fears, and calmed his agitated spirit in a dying hour. "My flesh," saith he, "is meat indeed; "I am the living bread."

The second is the appropriate emblem of those influences of the Holy Spirit which the risen, exalted Saviour sheds down upon men, as the precious fruit of his obedience unto death in our place. The sure testimony and pledge of his power and willingness to save, and the immediate efficient agent in enlightening the minds and renovating the hearts of men, that by their voluntary submission to his authority, and confiding trust in his promises, they may have a personal interest in all the blessings he has purchased by his obedience unto death. So it is written, "I will pour water on him that is thirsty;" and on the last day of the feast of tabernacles, Jesus stood and cried, saying: "If any man thirst," &c. This, then, is the water of which he speaks in the text. The powerful and abundant influences of his Holy Spirit, as refreshing, as invigorating to the soul as living water to the thirsty; cleansing it from the pollutions of sin, as by water, making it fruitful in those pure desires, and holy purposes, and devout and benevolent emotions and acts which are well pleasing to God, as those refreshing showers which

clothe the landscape with verdure and beauty, and bring forward the precious fruits of the earth, when the winter is over and gone. Of these spiritual influences, Jesus Christ teaches in the text that they give permanent satisfaction to the soul. "Whoso drinketh the water that I shall give him shall never thirst;" and that they are in the soul the preparation and the pledge, yea, the foretaste and commencement of eternal life.

In illustration of these truths, consider what is the appropriate work of the Holy Ghost in the gospel plan of redemption. I do not stop now to prove what the bible everywhere teaches, and the observation and experience of every serious and candid mind abundantly confirm, that our moral nature is in a state of deplorable disorder and ruin. We bear about with us a consciousness of ill desert at the hand of that glorious, awful being, who made us, and governs us, and will bring us into judgment. We are conscious of insatiable longings after rest and enjoyment, such as no earthly pursuit or attainment can permanently bestow. We tremble at the prospect of death, and shrink back from that unseen world to which we are hastening, because we dislike the holiness and dread the justice of the God of eternity.

Now, it is the work of the Holy Spirit to lead men into all the truth by which they are saved. To give to those amazing facts which are embodied in the system of redeeming mercy, wrought out and revealed by the Son of God, a living reality before the mind, and a transforming power over the heart. He enlightens, and renews, and sanctifies; he convinces of sin, and righteousness, and judgment; he takes the things of Christ and shows them to men; by his silent and gentle, yet powerful influences, men are made willing to believe the declarations, obey the precepts, and trust the pro-

mises of God. Thus they are set free from error, their hearts are purified, and they are kept from the evil that is in the world: "they bring forth the fruit of the Spirit, love, joy," &c. With the believing and obedient he dwells as the comforter, making every means of grace effectual, sanctifying every dispensation, and causing all things to work together for their best good—"a witnessing and sealing spirit," &c. Thus he probes the wound of our nature to its bottom, and applies the healing balm; he lays open our moral diseases in all their malignity and inveteracy, and discovers and administers to us the sovereign remedy; for our conscious guilt he leads us to the atoning blood and perfect righteousness of him who died for our sins, and rose from the dead, to justify our faith and hope in him. Those desires of good, those large and lofty aspirations which nothing earthly can satisfy, he lifts above the world, and fills them with the faith and hope of unseen eternal joys; and when sin is pardoned, and the mind has formed acquaintanceship with God and heavenly things, and the heart a relish for holy employment, society and joys, death is disarmed, and eternity, awful as it is to flesh and blood—which cannot enter it save through the dark and silent chambers of the sepulchre—eternity is anticipated by the regenerated spirit as its proper country—its home, beloved and longed for. Thus, by the spirit of Christ, a sinner is reconciled to God, to his duty, to the inevitable trials of his earthly lot, and to the destiny that awaits him when he goes hence. He has peace with God, peace of conscience, and a calm and peaceful frame. Here he finds solid and permanent satisfaction—that which is suited to his nature, to his character, to his circumstances. He who had sought in vain to quench his thirst at the streams of earthly good, drinks at this fountain and thirsts no

more. Bear witness ye who have made the trial. "There be many that say, who will show us any good?" The inward peace and satisfaction imparted to the soul by the spirit of Christ, are not like that which the world confers upon its most favored votaries; that is even richer in promise than in performance; its charms fascinate us in their pursuit, but fade and vanish in possession; whatever value may attach to any of its objects constantly diminishes, because the hour of our final separation from them constantly draws nearer. They are springs that cease to flow in the time of drought; streams that evaporate and are lost amid arid sands; in the striking language of the prophet, waters that fail—allusion here to the mirage. But saith Jesus, "He that drinketh of the water that I shall give shall never thirst." To the humble, obedient believer, he gives the Spirit to abide with him for ever; he is a temple of the Holy Ghost, which dwelleth in him. The effect is, growth in grace, progress in knowledge, holiness and joy, increasing confidence in the merits of Christ, love to him and his cause, delight in his service, and conformity to his example, "his peace is like a river," &c. The spirit of Christ, in his soul, is as a well of water, pure, refreshing, perennial, and these waters spring up into everlasting life. The character which the spirit forms in him is holy and heavenly in its principles and tendency, as well as in its origin. The habits of thought, and feeling, and conduct, thus acquired, and habitually strengthened and consolidated, are such as prepare the believer for the work, the worship, communion and joy of heaven. And while he is thus made meet for the kingdom of heaven, his title to it is ascertained and certified. "We know that if our earthly house were dissolved, we have a building of *God*, a house not made with hands." Nay, the work

of the Spirit in the believer is not only th e preparation but the foretaste, not only the pledge but the earnest. This is the full meaning of the expression, "It shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life." "So he that believeth *hath* life;" "We that believe *do enter* in." He hath given the *earnest*, a part of the purchased possession, the same in kind. What is everlasting life? Is it enlarged, distinct, ever-increasing knowledge? "He who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts." Is it perfect holiness; freedom and fervor in love? Now they are set free from the power of sin, renewed in the Spirit, delight in the law. Is it joy, exceeding great? Now they rejoice in Christ; they have peace and joy; they rejoice in hope of the glory. Is it the fellowship of just men made perfect? Here they commune with the saints, take sweet counsel. Is it to dwell in the house of the Lord for ever? Here they go into his courts; they see him in his ordinances; they are satisfied.

Grace and glory are connected, as the seed time and the harvest, as the bud with the blossom, the dawn with full day, the same in kind they differ in degree.

There, they eat the fruit of the tree of life, and drink the waters of the river of life; but here, they feed upon Jesus Christ, the living bud. "And the water that he giveth shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

SERMON VI.

THE CROSS OF CHRIST.

"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."—GALATIANS vi. 14.

BY the cross of Christ, as the phrase is used in the NEW Testament, we are to understand sometimes those trials, losses, reproaches, and sufferings to which believers submit in obedience to the command of Christ, and out of love to him. But more frequently it signifies those various and protracted humiliations, sorrows, and sufferings, by which our blessed Redeemer wrought out redemption for his people. This is no doubt its meaning in the text. Taking it in this sense, one is ready to consider this a very strange and surprising declaration of the Apostle. If he had gloried in the miraculous power, wisdom, and love of Christ, or in his glorious resurrection from the dead, or in his triumphant ascension to heaven, or in his exaltation at the right hand of the majesty on high and the mission of the Eternal Spirit to bear testimony to his Messiahship, and to convert the nations to the faith; this had not been wonderful; for in these things his power and Godhead are manifested, and a rational immortal creature may well glory in them, if he can claim any peculiar relation to him. But to glory in his cross; that which has ever been a reproach,—to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness; that with which the utmost ignominy and anguish are closely associated! that he should have gloried in this, how surprising. *The expression* implies, that he regarded the cross of

Christ with a high degree of esteem and complacency, as important and excellent. We do not glory in anything unless we see in it a worth and beauty that attract our esteem, and the strong expression, "God forbid that I should glory in anything, but the cross of Christ," plainly implies that to his view its value and loveliness were unparalleled and incomparable.

It implies, moreover, that he was conscious of a personal interest in the sufferings of Christ, and a peculiar relation to them; that to him the cross of Christ stood in intimate connexion with benefits that were very precious, and hopes most dear to his heart. We do not glory in any object unless we have in some way a personal interest in it. I may regard the character of a great and good man with esteem and admiration, though I am no way connected with him. But I do not glory in him unless he is my relative, or friend, or countryman. So, glorying in the cross implies an appropriation to ourselves of something in that object, or flowing from it, which we highly prize.

Lastly, glorying in the cross implies an open declaration and avowal of the emotions of esteem with which we regard it, and the blessings we receive or expect from it. So that however others may look upon it with coldness or contempt, or reproach us for our adherence to it, we count it honor and happiness to be known as its friends and advocates. Thus did the Apostle glory in the cross of Christ; and his language intimates a comparative disesteem and disregard of all his other possessions. His great talents and profound learning in which he had few superiors; his distinguished privileges as a Jew, in which so many of his countrymen gloried, and even his eminent gifts, labors, sufferings, and successes as a preacher of the Gospel, in which he came not a whit behind the very chiefest

Apostles—a comparative disregard of all these—a cordial renunciation and abandonment of them all, as a foundation of hope, and a source of consolation; and a clinging to the cross as the object most vital to his happiness, and dearest to his heart. So he avers elsewhere: "Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dross, that I may win Christ, and be found in him not having mine own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is by the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith, that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his *sufferings*, being made conformable unto his death." And that Paul's brethren and fellow laborers were in this respect like minded, all their writings testify. Everywhere they are unanimous in holding forth the sufferings and death of Christ as of transcendent importance and excellence. Everywhere they speak of them with feelings of cordial esteem and grateful love, such as no other topic awakens. They had learned this from their Master himself. In the hour of his perplexity and sorrow, he said of his sufferings with evident exultation, "Now is the judgment of this world; now is the Prince of this world cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me," and in that sacred ordinance which seals to believers the benefits of his death, he has appointed a public, solemn memorial and manifestation of his sufferings and death to be set forth and celebrated in his Church through successive ages, down to his second coming.

My brethren, have we fellowship with Paul and his brethren and his Master, in the emotions with which we meditate upon this subject? Do we glory in the

cross of Christ? Do we highly esteem it? Do we humbly and thankfully appropriate to ourselves the benefits and blessings that flow from it? Do we openly avow our attachment to the cross of Christ? These are questions that touch the very essence of character as it appears in the sight of God! The very foundations of hope, as they shall be put to the test in the great day of trial!

Let us inquire what reason Paul had to glory in the cross of Christ—what reason every believer has to be like minded. The sufferings and death of Christ, as they are set forth in the Scriptures of truth, have a two-fold aspect and bearing, as they relate to the character and moral government of God, and as they exert an influence upon the character, condition, and destiny of man. These are inseparably connected. The first stands related to the second, as principle and cause, to its consequence and effect. Both were blended in the song of angels at the Saviour's birth. "Glory to God in the highest; on earth peace, and good will toward men." Both were present to the divine mind from eternity, and were included in the counsels of everlasting wisdom and love. In the execution of the purposes of God, both are progressively unfolded and manifested. They mutually act and re-act, and shed light, beauty, and glory upon each other. In the ultimate perfect consummation of both, the universe of holy beings shall rejoice. All the obedient subjects of God's government shall feel themselves laid under new obligations to him who sitteth upon the throne; and bound to each other by new ties of love and joy. While redeemed sinners, whose salvation was the special object of those sufferings, shall celebrate the praises of their deliverer, in peculiar and appropriate strains, they shall sing the new song. Lo, angels are represented as bending from

their seats of bliss, to look into the mysteries of redeeming love, as they shine in the cross of Christ. Unto principalities and powers in heavenly places, is known by the Church, the manifold wisdom of God; and the angels round about the throne join with the ransomed from among men, in that celestial anthem, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and glory, and honor, and blessing." But it is specially to the influence of the sufferings of Christ upon the character and destiny of men, that I wish to direct your attention in what I have yet to say of the reasons why every believer should glory in the cross of Christ.

In this view of the subject, I remark, 1st, we should glory in the cross of Christ, because it furnishes the only solid foundation of hope towards God. How may a sinner be just before God? is a question which unaided reason can never answer to the satisfaction of an enlightened conscience! If we have any correct views of the character and moral government of God; any just discernment of the obligations and excellence of his law; any proper impressions of the evil nature and awful tendency of sin, we shall find it difficult, nay impossible, to reconcile the justice and holiness of God, and the rights of his government, with the pardon of sin, and the restoration of sinners to his favor. But every believer feels himself a sinner. He is conscious that in the sight of God his transgressions are more than he can number. He is conscious, too, that he can make no atonement for his own sins; that he can offer no satisfaction to divine justice; make no reparation for his violation of the law, unless it be by suffering in his own person the full weight of that penalty which the justice of God has denounced against sin. But that penalty is endless death. Finite sufferings can never

exhaust it. If he sinks under it, he sinks for ever. In this situation he feels that he is responsible to God his righteous Judge. He knows that he is fast filling up his allotted period of probation, and hastening to that decisive interview with his Maker, which must fix his unchangeable destiny. He looks on every side for some refuge from his conscious guilt and pollution; some solid foundation on which he may build the hope of pardon and salvation. But he looks in vain, until he beholds by faith the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world. He hears the testimony of God concerning his Son, and that eternal life which is freely offered to sinners through him. He examines the character of Christ; the transcendent dignity of his divine nature; the spotless purity of his humanity; the lessons of heavenly wisdom and love that fall from his lips, and the stupendous miracles by which his divine mission was confirmed. He fixes his attention upon the closing scenes of his earthly ministry, the agony of the garden, the ignominy and anguish of the cross, to which the adorable sufferer voluntarily submitted. There he beholds a sacrifice every way suited to make expiation for sin; an adequate atonement to the violated law: an ample illustration of the justice and righteousness of God. "Him hath God set forth a propitiatory sacrifice, to declare his righteousness in the remission of sins, that God might be just and the justifier of every one that believeth in him." He listens to the gospel call. "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." And to the testimony of God, that he is exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and the remission of sins. He cordially obeys that call, embraces that offer, and relies upon that gracious assurance for pardon and salvation. And being justified by faith, he has peace with God, through our Lord Jesus

Christ, and rejoices in hope of the glory of God. He sees the justice and mercy of Jehovah, sweetly blending and harmonizing in the pardon of sin, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, and his conscience is relieved of the burden of guilt, his fears of wrath are dispelled, peace becomes an inmate of his bosom, and hope sheds her balmy influence over his troubled spirit.

His confidence in the stability and safety of this foundation of hope towards God, is confirmed and established by his experience of the power of the very same truths which have spoken peace to his conscience, to subdue his sins, purify his heart, and teach him to walk in newness of life.

This leads us to notice a second reason for the believer's glorying in the cross of Christ, his experience of its efficacy to make him holy. Man is made holy, not by any direct operation of Almighty power upon the essential constitution of his soul, adding to it any new faculty, or subverting or changing the laws by which it is governed. To suppose this, is to lose sight of the essential distinction between mind and matter, and to confound physical and moral power and agency. The spirit of God is the only sanctifier; by his agency and power alone are sinners renewed in righteousness and true holiness. But the Spirit sanctifies men in a way adapted to our rational nature, and conformable to our moral agency. It is not against our will, but by making us willing; not by any direct and immediate movement, subjecting or infringing our freedom, but by presenting truth to our minds, and pressing it upon our consciences and our hearts, so that in view of it we think and feel, resolve and act. Now the truths by which, pre-eminently, the Spirit thus operates, are the very truths which are illustrated in the sufferings and *death of* Christ. The views of sin and holiness, of

God and the soul, and the realities of eternity, which there shine out more clearly and powerfully than in any other dispensation of God, are the great means by which the Spirit leads a sinner to repent, and believe, and obey the Gospel, and kindles in his icy heart love to God and love to man. As it is only in the cross of Christ that the awakening sinner finds any solid ground on which to build the hope of pardon and acceptance, so it is only here that he is relieved from the terrors of the Almighty which had fallen upon him, emancipated from the spirit of bondage under which he groaned, and enabled to look up to him with humble hope, and to present to him, not the extorted, reluctant service of a slave, but the free, ingenuous, affectionate homage and obedience of a child. And those very influences of the spirit, without which all means and all motives would be equally and utterly unavailing to restore the love of God to its rightful supremacy in the sinner's heart, are the fruit of the Redeemer's sufferings and death. They date their origin from his atoning sacrifice, and flow to us from his cross as their perennial fountain and meritorious cause; so that in every sense the cross of Christ is the only source of holiness to the believer. There shine those glorious truths which the Spirit uses to subdue his will and purify his affections, and call forth every devout, and holy, and heavenly emotion of his soul. There he obtains such views of God, and beholds him standing in such an attitude in relation to himself as is fitted to give those truths a quickening and sanctifying operation upon his heart. And thence come to him those sweet and powerful energies of the Holy Ghost, which make him alive when dead in sin, transform him into the very likeness of Christ, and make him meet for eternal glory. And shall he not glory in that cross which thus emancipates him from

the hateful bondage of sin, and brings him into the glorious liberty of the sons of God? It seems to have been specially in view of the sanctifying power of the cross, that the apostle penned the text: "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

In the third place, the believer glories in the cross of Christ, because it is the source of solid consolation and joy to his heart. That which lays a sure foundation of hope towards God; that which subdues the reigning power of sin over the heart, and enthrones the love of God in the inner man, must be a source of consolation and joy; the joy of pardoned sin, the consolation of a conscience at peace with God, the tranquil repose of a spirit sweetly bowed down in cheerful acquiescence with the will of God; the holy delight of free and filial access to God upon a mercy seat, as our reconciled God and Father; the animating consciousness of growing conformity to his blessed likeness; the cheering hope of standing, ere long, faultless in his presence with exceeding joy, and the assurance that all things, not excepting the most mysterious and trying dispensations of Providence, are working together to bring about this most desirable and blessed consummation. These are the immediate consequences of that peace with God, and that restoration to holiness, which the believer receives through the sufferings and death of Christ. These are the fruits of immortality which grow upon the cross of Christ, once stained with his precious blood, now a tree of life to all his humble followers. And the believer knows that these are but the first fruits; he partakes of them as the earnest of richer blessings that are prepared for him in those mansions which his once

crucified, but now risen and exalted Redeemer, has gone to prepare for him.

And shall he not glory in the cross? Shall he not highly esteem it? Shall he not cling to it as the object most precious to his heart? Shall he not avow his love for a suffering Saviour, and his confidence in him, in the face of a disobedient and gainsaying world? Yes, though it is to some a stumbling-block, and to others foolishness; though ungodly men pass by it with cold neglect, or wag their heads in scorn, he cannot be ashamed of that which is the power of God unto his salvation; he cannot but glory in that which is the solid foundation of his hope towards God, the living spring of holy emotion and holy action, the perennial fountain of pure and lasting joys.

SERMON VII.

LOVE TO AN UNSEEN SAVIOUR.

"Whom having not seen, ye love."—1 Peter i. 8.

Love to an unseen Saviour is the distinguishing characteristic of the true Christian. In their present imperfect state, the people of Christ differ in many points, but this one trait of character they all possess. Whatever may be their natural dispositions, their attainments in religious knowledge, their opinions on less essential matters of doctrine, all love the Lord Jesus Christ. Without this, none may make any pretence to Christian character. This is the animating principle of holy obedience, the constraining motive to religious self-denial, the soul of the new creature, which governs and gives life and activity to the whole man. Unregenerate men may be amiable in their tempers, upright in their dealings, unblameable in their external deportment, scrupulous in the discharge of many religious duties; they may have an extensive and accurate knowledge of the doctrines and precepts of the bible; be filled with self-complacency while viewing their own attainments, and indulge strong and confident expectations of heaven; but they never truly love the Lord Jesus while they mistake his true character, while they look upon him only as a saviour from misery. Let his character and the nature of his salvation be fairly set before them, and he is in every instance a root out of dry ground.

In the eyes of men, who look only at the outward appearance, there may often be little difference between the sincere Christian and the hypocrite, the formalist or

the merely moral man; but in the view of the searcher of hearts their different sentiments towards the Lord Jesus constitute a marked distinction—a distinction which gives a coloring to the whole character, and which shall be blazoned forth in that coming day when the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed; a distinction which will fully justify, in the eyes of all impartial witnesses, that righteous sentence by which the one shall be welcomed to the mansions of immortal bliss, and the other consigned to the prison of everlasting despair. Yes, beloved hearers, the sentiments of your hearts towards Christ are now decisive of your character in the sight of the omniscient God, and if he should at this moment summon you to stand at his tribunal, be assured they form the criterion which must fix unalterably your destiny.

Can there be proposed to *any* of us a more interesting, solemn, and momentous question than this—Do you love Christ? If a question which is decisive of our character in the sight of our Maker and our Judge; which determines whether we stand among the friends or the enemies of the Almighty God; whether frail and dying as we are, we are now walking on the confines of heaven, or on the slippery shores of the burning lake; if such a question be interesting, solemn, and momentous, then is this deeply so. That we may be able to answer it without uncertainty, let us inquire, why the Christian loves an unseen Christ? Men in general find no difficulty in loving those whom they see, and with whom they are every day conversant, provided they possess qualities congenial to their own dispositions, and calculated to attract their esteem and affection; but when they are required to love Christ, if they think of the subject at all, they perhaps often think if they had ever seen the Lord Jesus; if they had been with

him while he was on earth; had witnessed his unwearied exertions to do good even to his most bitter enemies; if they had heard the gracious words which fell from his lips; if they had been spectators of that deeply affecting scene which closed his eventful life; of his meekness, his patience, his love to men, his submission to the will of heaven; if they had listened to that dying prayer for those who nailed him to the cross: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do:" their hearts must have melted into tenderness and love; their charmed affections must have hovered round an object so lovely, have fixed upon it with strong desire, and clung to it with enraptured and unalterable fondness. But when their affections are claimed for one whom they have never seen; who lived and died centuries ago—though they must acknowledge he possesses many estimable qualities, yet their hearts are little moved; and while the God of this world hath blinded their minds that they cannot *see* the brightest glories of his character, even those excellences which they can appreciate, seem rather like lovely but fantastic visions, than like sober and substantial realities. Not so the Christian; he possesses that faith in the testimony of God's unerring word which is the evidence of things not seen; he has felt his need of a Saviour; by the light which the Holy Spirit has poured into his mind, he has seen the glorious all-sufficiency of Christ; has seen that in him righteousness and peace have met together; that in him there is glory to God in the highest, while on earth there is peace and good-will towards men; and such is his inwrought and heartfelt conviction of these truths, that his love to an unseen Saviour is no less genuine and ardent, than if he saw and communed with him from day to day. Whatever others may think of Christ, in the eyes of the believer he is alto-

gether lovely. While others say, Who will show us any earthly good? his language is, Lord, lift thou upon me the light of thy countenance. In his person, in his character, in his work, he is the chief among ten thousand; he is precious in the eyes of his people. With the Psalmist of old they can say, "*Thou* art fairer than the children of men; grace is poured into thy lips, therefore God has blessed thee for ever." In his person, the glories of the divine and human natures are united. Whatever there is in divine perfection to awaken reverence, esteem, or desire; whatever in unsullied human excellency to enkindle ardent love, to call forth the strongest expressions of delightful and endearing attachment, are united in the person of Christ. Transcendent majesty and gracious condescension, in their highest perfection, meet and blend harmoniously in him. He is the mighty God, the everlasting Father; and yet the man of sorrows, the meek and lovely Saviour, whose heart melted with the tenderest compassion, from whose lips flowed the mild accents of heavenly mercy. His character is a bright constellation of excellences, where each shines with surpassing lustre. He is the image of the invisible God, the brightness of the Father's glory. In him are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; the riches of his grace are unsearchable, his love passeth knowledge; it was stronger than death; all power is his, both in heaven and on earth; he is full of grace and truth; in him all the fulness of the Godhead dwells; he is head over all things to the church; whatever can exalt, dignify, adorn, or endear the character, is found in him, without diminution or alloy. "Never," says an eminent writer, "never was a character at the same time so commanding and natural, so resplendent and pleasing, so amiable and venerable. There is in it a peculiar contrast between an awful greatness and dig-

nity, and the most conciliating loveliness, tenderness, and compassion. Each separate virtue is made stronger by opposition and contrast; and the union of so many virtues forms a brightness which fitly represents the glory of that God who dwells in light inaccessible. Such is the Lord Christ, altogether lovely; such is he in the eyes of his people, therefore do they love him." But that affection which Christ's people bear to him, has special reference to him as Mediator of the covenant of grace. As a Redeemer, he is very precious to them. The glories of redemption, which are almost entirely hid from an unbelieving world, shine brightest in the view of his people. They love him for the excellency of his mediatorial work. The excellency of this work consists in its sufficiency to supply the necessities of men, and its tendency to promote the glory of God.

1st. Christ is dear to his people because he has made a full provision for the supply of their necessities; for they see in him the fulness of pardoning mercy, and of sanctifying grace; they have felt their need of pardon; they have seen themselves by nature and by practice sinners; they have been weighed down by the burden of unpardoned guilt, and felt themselves ready to sink under the just, yet awful sentence of a violated law; they have realized their inability to make any atonement for their sins, or to satisfy the demands of justice; full of apprehension and dismay, they have, perhaps, attempted to allay their guilty fears by a round of religious duties, by their own obedience to the law to build a hiding-place for their affrighted souls, but the lightnings of Sinai have pursued and driven them from this and every other refuge of lies; they have experienced the inefficacy of their own efforts, the impotency of all created help. Guilty and helpless, bowed down by a weight of sin, they have seemed to themselves

ready to sink in the abyss of despair. In the moment of their utmost need, Christ has appeared for their relief. They have heard him saying, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." He has calmed their apprehensions of wrath; he has removed from their consciences the heavy burden of unpardoned guilt. Enlightened by the Holy Spirit, they have seen that Christ can be just, and yet the justifier of every one that believeth. Believing in him they have felt the curse remove; a heavenly peace has been shed abroad in their hearts; they have been enabled to rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Christ has given them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. He has raised them from the horrible pit, and from the miry clay; he has set their feet upon a rock, and put a new song into their mouths, even salvation to our God. And shall they not love him? Yes, while they remember the wormwood and the gall, verily they love him for his pardoning mercy. Christ is precious in the eyes of his people, because they see in him a fulness of sanctifying grace. Once they were the willing slaves of sin; like other men, they inherited a depraved nature; they wandered far from God, and loved the distance well; they were utterly averse to holy employments and holy joys; they had no perception of, or delight in, moral excellence. But they have been created anew by the almighty energies of the Holy Spirit; they have been enlightened to behold the glory of God; to regard him as supremely amiable; whose character is the perfection of every excellence, and who is the sole fountain of life and blessedness. Hence they cannot but desire his favor, and pant after conformity to his image. Holiness is lovely in their eyes—they see its beauty. Sin is no longer regarded with

delight. Intrinsically base, odious, and abominable in the sight of God, it is the object of their abhorrence. They earnestly desire to be freed from its power and pollution. Those remains of sin which they perceive in themselves, cause them to groan, being burdened. Often they are ready, when iniquities prevail against them, to cry with the apostle, "Oh! wretched man that I am."

Christ is a Redeemer from the power of sin; they have felt his power to break its yoke from their necks, to redeem their captive souls from its grievous thraldom; they are no longer under its dominion, and though they are not entirely free from its influence, yet from time to time they experience the efficacy of his grace, to sanctify their hearts and fit them for the holy enjoyments and employments of Heaven. Though remaining sin requires that their bodies should moulder back to dust, and see corruption, yet confiding in the power and grace of Christ, they trust that from the ruins of its earthly prison, the soul, no longer chained down to objects of sense, every stain washed away in his precious blood, shall shake from its pinions the dust of earth and the dew of death, and rise exulting to the fellowship of kindred spirits in that mansion of rest, where no sin can enter, and all tears are wiped from every eye. And they look forward, full of joyous hope, to that glorious morning when at the call of their Redeeming God even their sleeping dust shall wake, and bursting the bands of death, shall rise from the dark and silent tomb, no more to see corruption, but glowing with immortal life, resplendent with celestial beauty, arrayed in the shining vestments of immortality, join the glorified spirit, and with it abide for ever in the paradise of God. This glorious redemption from sin is the work of Christ alone. All that they have already felt, all that they hope for,

is from him. And shall they not love him?—not love their unseen Saviour; when they know and feel that there is in him a fulness of sanctifying grace! The joy, the ecstasy, the loud and lasting songs of the unnumbered millions who shall appear in his perfect likeness at the day of his second coming, will bear witness to their love.

But 2nd, Christ is lovely in the eyes of his people, because his work as Mediator of the covenant of grace has gloriously displayed the divine perfections, and its tendency is greatly to promote the glory of God. The heart of the believer has been reconciled to God. He has been enlightened to some just perceptions of the transcendent glory of God, of the excellence and amiableness of the Divine character; he feels how desirable it is that God alone should be exalted. The language of his heart is, "Be thou exalted, O God, above the Heavens, let thy glory fill the earth." Christ has magnified the divine law, by obedience to its precepts; by his submission to its penalty he has shown that it is holy, just, and good in its demands, and in its sanctions. In the hour of apprehension, anxiety, and anguish, the petition which calmed his troubled spirits and gave vent to the feelings of his trusting heart, was, "Father, glorify thy name;" and it was answered.

In the cross of Christ the Divine perfections shine with the brightest lustre; there, attributes seemingly jarring and opposite meet and harmonize and illustrate each other. There, wisdom, holiness, justice, truth, goodness, and mercy unite, and mingling their beams pour forth a flood of celestial light, and uncreated glory. There, adoring angels learn new lessons of Jehovah's excellence, and raise louder their songs of praise. There, in distant ages the Heavenly hosts shall fix their admiring gaze, and find fresh cause of wonder, gratitude,

and love. Thence, to all eternity shall accrue an increasing revenue of praise to the most High. Thus does Christ's work as Mediator promote the glory of God, an object most dear to the believer. And shall not believers love him? The angels, who need no redemption, love, and shall not redeemed sinners—the purchase of his blood?

Such are some of the grounds of that love which Christians bear to him; such some of his claims to their attachment. In his person he is the chief among ten thousand, altogether lovely. In his character fairer than the morning star, the brightness of the Father's glory, the very image of the invisible God. As Mediator he has accomplished a work which no other could have performed; a work by which objects are attained whose importance outstrips calculation, and defies comparison; objects unspeakably dear to the believer's heart, of no less moment than the redemption of an innumerable company of immortals from the thraldom of sin, and the horrors of eternal death, and the display of God's transcendent glory to an admiring universe. In accomplishing this, he trod the wine-press alone; he bore alone the hiding of his Father's face, the desertion of his friends, the contempt and hatred of his enemies, the malice of infernal spirits; and after agonizing in the garden, after expiring on the cross, burst the bars of death and ascended on high, there to reign until he has accomplished all the good pleasure of his goodness. And shall not his people love him? Verily, they do love him. Their love to him is sincere; not a feigned or forced complacency towards a character in which they take little interest, but a hearty affection to one, who, though unseen, is very precious to them. It is supreme, triumphing over every opposing attachment, *leading* them to submit to sufferings, to make sacrifices,

to persevere in the most laborious and self-denying exertions for his sake, to hate every earthly thing, yea, their own life when standing in opposition to him. It is most ardent love; a flame which many waters cannot quench. It increases amid opposition, and consumes every interfering passion. It leads them to prize Christ's presence above all things else while here on earth, and to long that they may depart and be with him, which is far better; yea, it has often caused his people to triumph amid the agonies of dissolving nature, in the prospect of meeting him whom their souls loved; to rejoice when he has called them to his presence, though they mounted to Heaven from the gibbet, or their souls rode upward on the wings of the flames by which their bodies were consumed. It manifests itself by frequent and affectionate thoughts of him. While engaged in the common duties of life, their souls often go out to seek for him, and when at leisure they fix on him without constraint, as the needle turns continually to the pole. It manifests itself again by a delight in his word, and in all the ordinances in which he has promised to meet his people, and where he is wont to gladden their hearts by the manifestation of himself. Love to Christ manifests itself by love to his people. "He that loveth him that begat, loveth also him that is begotten of him." It shows itself by love to his cause; by earnest and persevering exertions to promote his glory. Christ has established a kingdom in the earth. All who love him desire the prosperity of that kingdom, and strive to advance its interests. Above all, Christ's people manifest their love to him by doing his will, by a constant persevering, and cheerful obedience to his commands! This is the surest test of genuine love to him; it is the one which he himself has set. "If ye love me keep my commandments." "Then are

ye my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you." All who love the Lord Jesus Christ strive sincerely to keep all his commandments. Their obedience is not indeed perfect, but its imperfection is matter of grief and sorrow to them; they are not satisfied with present attainments; they labor to render their obedience more perfect; they desire to be conformed to the image of Christ; and they are resolved by his grace never to cease struggling with remaining imperfection, until, being made like him, they see him as he is.

And now, beloved hearers, do *you* love an unseen Saviour? By nature your affections are prone to fix on the objects of sense; have they been taken off them, and fixed on the uncreated excellences of Christ, who is invisible? Do you love him because he is lovely in himself, and in his person and character altogether deserving your affections? Because he is an Almighty Redeemer, able to deliver your souls from the power of sin and death? Do you love him because you have experienced his pardoning mercy and sanctifying grace? —Because you rely on his grace alone, to set you free from the condemning sentence which you feel is just, and from the power of sin, which is your greatest burden, and most odious to you? Does he appear lovely to you because he is an holy Saviour, who has magnified God's law, and gloriously illustrated the Divine perfections? Does your love manifest itself by frequent and affectionate thoughts of him? Is he the dear object around whom your thoughts hover, and on whom they are ever ready to fix? Do you love communion with him? Do you seek it in all the ways of his appointment? When you enter his courts do you desire to see the King in his glory? Do you love to meet him in your closets? Do you love his word?—his people? *Is his image* dear to you whenever you behold it?

Do you love his cause? Do you strive to promote his glory in the salvation of your fellow men? Are you obedient to his commands? Is your obedience universal?—Is it constant?—Is it cheerful? Do you *delight* to do his will? Are you ready, if he require it, to forsake all, take up your cross, and follow him? Do you mourn that you obey him no better? Is it your most earnest desire to be freed from all remaining sin, and serve Christ without imperfection? Then do you indeed love him, and the Father himself loveth you because ye have loved him, and have believed that he came out from God: Then are you of his people, his sheep, to whom he will give eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of his hand. Come then to his table. For you he gave himself. Be exhorted, then, to go on your way rejoicing. Though now you see him not, yet believing, even now you may rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory. That unseen Saviour whom you love will supply all your need, and he will not always be hidden from your sight. The day is near, when he will call you to his presence. He has gone from your view to prepare a place for you, and he will come ere long to take you to himself, that where he is you may be also. There, you shall see his face without a veil; there, you shall be like him, for you shall see him as he is. Nothing there shall interrupt your intimate communion with him. While you contemplate his uncreated beauty, while your enraptured souls behold new glories open to your view in his person, character, and work, your love shall burn with a purer and a brighter flame, and your joy rise to ecstacy unspeakable, while you unite with the glorious host of the redeemed in ascribing to the Lamb that was slain, power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and glory, and honor, and blessing. But

are there not some that now hear me, who do not love an unseen Saviour? whose affections are wholly engrossed by visible objects? who declare this day by their conduct that they take no delight in him who is invisible? Ah, unhappy fellow sinners! he will not always be an unseen Christ. Behold, he cometh in clouds, and every eye shall see him! You, too, must look upon him. That very Saviour whom you now neglect is the appointed Judge of quick and dead. At his bar you must stand; from his lips you must hear that sentence which will fix your destiny, which, if you do not love him, will consign you to the chambers of eternal death. Hear ye the language of God's word: "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha." If any man, no matter how amiable in disposition, no matter how moral his deportment, no matter what his gifts and professions of piety, if any man *love* not him—it is not said if any man openly oppose Christ's cause, persecute his followers, ridicule his religion, or blaspheme his name—if any do not cordially and supremely love the Lord Jesus (ah, how many who are well reported among men, how many of you does it include), let him be accursed, set apart as a vessel of wrath, singled out as a monument of vengeance, devoted to an awful and eternal destruction when the Lord shall come. In that great day when Christ shall sit upon the throne of his glory, and all the unnumbered millions of Adam's race are gathered before him, when the retributions of eternity begin to take effect, when the righteous are welcomed to the kingdom prepared for them, and the wicked are cast into outer darkness. Oh! who can bear a curse like this; who can dwell with devouring fire; who can lie down with everlasting burnings. Dear fellow sinners, as God is true this must be the doom of every one who

does not sincerely love Christ. If that awful day should now break upon an astonished world; if the archangel's trumpet should now awake the sleeping dead; if the bursting heavens should now reveal the Son of God in flaming fire; this curse must light on every one of us who does not love Christ. Ah! how heart-rending, while sinking under its intolerable weight, to remember offers of mercy neglected, and overtures of grace despised. Now Christ is waiting to be reconciled to his enemies; now he knocks at your hearts soliciting admittance. Oh! be wise; kiss the Son lest he be angry.

SERMON VIII.

THE LIKENESS OF GOD.

"I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness."—PSALM xvii. 15.

THE children of God are not distinguished by the possession of a large share of the good things of this life. A variety of causes conspires to prevent them from amassing the wealth, acquiring the honors, or enjoying the pleasures which earth affords. Frequently a sovereign God chooses the poor of this world to make them rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom prepared for them that love him. Frequently in his wise and gracious providence he frustrates their attempts to procure an abundance of earthly good, or strips them of what they already possess, that he may lead them to seek delight in himself alone, or preserve them from the temptation incident to fulness. Independently of these considerations, the good man's conscience will not permit him to follow many of those paths which lead most directly to present emolument; and he whose treasure is in heaven, cannot be expected to pursue it with the same ardor as those whose hope and portion lie below. But while the lot of the pious is not marked by a profusion of temporal good, it contains a full proportion of those sufferings which render life a vale of tears. They were long since told by one who wrote under the guidance of the Spirit of unerring truth, "If ye endure not chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye not sons; for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." Their

Heavenly Father often corrects them for their offences, while he permits others to indulge in sin without restraint, and in undisturbed security to ripen for the day of righteous retribution. Their conscientious opposition to the principles and practice of a degenerate world often subjects them to insult and injury.

While strangers and pilgrims here, the dissimilarity between their conduct and that of those around them, frequently exposes them to hatred, so that when worldly policy bears sway, waters of a full cup are often wrung out to the people of God. Yet, in the midst of all this privation and suffering, they may rejoice evermore, for there is an angel that goes with them, and strews roses of delight in this thorny path. They have a hope full of immortality, which may well sweeten the cup of affliction, dry the tear of suffering, and cheer the sinking soul in the hour of deepest despondency.

When the shades of sorrow and distress spread around them the thickest gloom, they have only to raise the eye of faith, and they behold the near and certain prospect of a portion which will fully satisfy the soul, a crown of glory that fadeth not away. Thus did the pious psalmist. David seems to have written this psalm in a time of great distress from the malice of his enemies; probably when persecuted by Saul. He earnestly prays for Divine protection; represents in strong language the cruelty of his enemies; recognizes the overruling power of God in those sufferings which were inflicted upon him by the hands of men; and, in a strain of despondency, speaks of the present prosperity of the wicked. At the close of the psalm he seems to have felt that his prayer was heard; the clouds that had gathered around him disperse; his faith acquires new vigor; he obtains a glimpse of that bright and glorious inheritance which is reserved for

all who love God; and he exclaims in the language of holy triumph, "As for me, I shall behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness."

In discussing this subject, it is designed to explain the nature of that likeness to God of which David expresses his confident expectation, and which shall be the sure reward of all who truly love God; and then briefly to notice the time when they shall enter upon the enjoyment of this portion; when they awake; and the effect it will have upon them,—"They shall be satisfied."

I. What is the nature of that likeness to God spoken of in the text? To this we answer, it is a spiritual likeness, an enstamping the Divine image upon the soul, a moulding the soul into the Divine similitude. It cannot be anything corporeal. God is a Spirit, and a material body cannot resemble spirit. It is true, indeed, our Saviour has ascended into heaven with a body like our own, only unspeakably more glorious, shining with such amazing splendor that a sight of it caused the beloved apostle to fall at his feet as dead; and we know, if we believe in him, that he will ere long change these vile bodies, and fashion them like unto his glorious body. This will make us like the human nature of our beloved Lord; but this is not the meaning of our text. The likeness of which the psalmist speaks is a conformity of soul to God. In order to this, we must undergo a great change; for, alas! light and darkness are not more opposite than a holy God and a depraved man. Yet we are not to imagine it to be a change in essence, so that it would be a human soul no longer; neither are we to regard it as implying any power or faculties we do not at present *in any degree possess.* It may be, *indeed, there* are in our souls germs of powers which

lie dormant in this infant stage of our existence, but which will shoot forth and bear fruits of holiness and blessedness in the regions of eternal day, but on this subject the Scriptures are silent, and by our own researches we can never arrive at certainty. That likeness to God of which the righteous shall partake, will consist in a similarity between the qualities of their souls and the attributes of the Divine nature. In this respect they shall be like God. But there are some of the Divine attributes which are incommunicable, because inconsistent with the idea of a created nature. Such are independence, immensity, absolute immutability and eternity; these, from their very nature, cannot be given to any creature. In respect to these, therefore, the righteous cannot be like God. But their likeness to God will consist in knowledge, holiness and blessedness.

1st. It will consist in *knowledge*. This we are taught in other passages of the sacred Scriptures. Thus Christians are exhorted to put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him. The apostle writes of himself, "Now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known." Our knowledge must ever be derived, and dependent, and in this respect unlike that of God, which is underived and independent. God knoweth all things, not from the things themselves or because they exist, but from his own essence: something as a wise builder knows the structure, which he is about to erect, from the image of it in his own mind, though the materials are not yet provided or put together; consequently, his knowledge is absolutely independent. It was the same from eternity, before all creatures began to exist, and it will continue the same to eternity, while created systems rise into being, roll round their appointed course,

and are dissolved. Nor can creatures ever become omniscient. It is only that incomprehensible and glorious Being who made and governs all things, whose infinite mind, at one immense survey, beholds all things, certain and contingent, actual and possible, past, present, and future. Yet the righteous shall resemble God in the *certainty* of their knowledge. At present our knowledge of the most interesting subject is confined by very narrow limits, and even within those limits there is much uncertainty and error. Our reason, at best, is but a glimmering light, is obscured by sin, and often almost extinguished by prejudice and passion. God hath graciously been pleased, by a plain revelation of his will, to give us absolute certainty with respect to those great truths on which our eternal well-being essentially depends. This light from heaven shines on the path of life, but that is a narrow way, and doubts and darkness rest on all beyond. The pleasure we might derive from the discovery of truth is greatly lessened by the uncertainty in which it is involved. But God knows with infallible certainty; he is not liable to be mistaken or deceived. If we are his people, when we awake in his likeness we shall know even as we are known. In thy light, oh! God, shall we see light. Mistake and error arise from sin, and they shall cease when Christ's people are freed from the last mark of the apostacy, and made gloriously perfect with him. No shadow of uncertainty shall rest upon those truths which are objects of contemplation to the blessed; no unwelcome doubts intrude to mar their joys.

Again, the knowledge of glorified saints shall resemble the Divine knowledge in its clearness and distinctness. Now we see as through a glass darkly. Even of that comparatively small portion of truth with which we are acquained, our views are very indistinct. En-

veloped in the mists of sense, and covered with the darkness of sin, we see objects very superficially, and often they do not appear to us as they really are. When we survey the works of God, how much is there of wisdom and goodness which we cannot see! how many creatures seem to us useless! how many even hurtful! In the Providence of God, how much is to us mysterious and inscrutable! How often are clouds and darkness around about the Almighty, and his ways in the great deep! When we look into his word, how much which we cannot explain or understand; how much of which we cannot see the consistency or propriety. On every side there is much which, to the eye of feeble reason, seems like darkness, deformity, confusion, and discord. But ah! my friends, the imperfection is in ourselves. God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. In his sight all things are full of light and beauty, order and harmony. No cloud obscures the vision of the Almighty, no number or variety of objects distract his attention; nothing so hidden or mysterious that it is not naked and open to him. He knows that all things have the proper nature, perform the proper offices, and promote the proper ends. That under his most wise and holy guidance all shall eventually conspire to bring about the greatest good. Such, also in kind, shall be the knowledge of the blessed, when they shall see, not through a glass darkly, but face to face. When the soul shall be elevated above the mists of sense, and the darkness of sin shall have fled away. Oh! when the mind shall be freed from all that now obscures it, what unthought of glories shall rise to view in all the works and ways of God. What order and beauty shall shine in all that now appears most confused and inexplicable!

Again: though creatures can never become omni-

scient, yet the knowledge of glorified saints, compared with what they now possess, may very properly be said to resemble the Divine knowledge in extent. Several causes will contribute to the enlargement of the sphere of knowledge to those happy spirits who worship in the temple above. Doubtless, the powers of the soul will greatly expand. This life is but the morning of our days, the threshold of our existence. All our powers are but partially unfolded in this infant stage. We are hardly able to be familiar with anything but the fleeting visions of this shadowy world. The immense magnitude, the awful importance of invisible realities, were they fully seen, would no doubt crush our infant powers, and they are wisely veiled from our view. But when we go to behold them in the clear light of eternity, our minds must be greatly strengthened or we must be overpowered by their dazzling splendor. All obstruction to the acquisition of knowledge will be removed; the soul will be no longer impeded and clogged by a gross material body. When sin shall be totally eradicated, passion and prejudice, which spring from it, must die. Then the spirits of the blessed will not, as at present, be pent up in a dark, obscure, and narrow corner of the universe, but dwelling in the heavenly Jerusalem, enjoy every advantage for the attainment of knowledge. Oh! with what holy joy will they drink in the truth at the pure eternal fountain where it flows. When freed from error, and confusion, and sin, and standing on the pinnacle of creation, who can tell what new discoveries of the power, wisdom, and goodness of the Creator will pour in upon the enlarged soul as it looks abroad over the immensity of the works of God!

When the glorious consummation to which they tend shall shed new light upon the dealings of Providence to *the church* and to individuals, what displays of wisdom

and tenderness, before unknown, shall animate the grateful praises of the blessed, as, from the heights of the heavenly Zion, they review the way in which they have been led. When the thunders of the judgment day shall have announced the catastrophe of the great drama now acting on the theatre of this life; when the great work of redeeming sinners shall have been completed, and the ransomed of the Lord have entered Zion with songs and everlasting joy; when the nations of the saved shall walk in the light of the Lamb; what unutterable glories will blaze in every part of the stupendous plan of redeeming love! But your time compels us to dismiss this theme, delightful as it is. We remark,

2d. The future likeness of the saints to God will consist in *holiness*. This was a part of that likeness to God in which man was first created; for God made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions. The moral image of God is defaced and destroyed in apostate man. But in Christ Jesus this glory of our nature is restored. They that are Christ's, have put on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness. Yet this restoration is only partial in the present life; for, saith the apostle John: "If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." But the whole body of believers shall, ere long, be made perfect in holiness, for the Lord Jesus will present them to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. The Eternal God alone is essentially, independently, and necessarily holy. He is holiness itself, and all that is excellent among creatures is derived from him, and is but a faint reflection of his glorious holiness. He is infinitely removed from all sin. All moral evil is the object of his perfect abhorrence. He commands his people—"Be ye

holy, for I am holy." He has given us a holy law as a rule of our conduct, which, if it were perfectly obeyed, would banish all sin, and make this guilty, wretched world a habitation of holiness and peace. But alas! even the best of men, while in the body, are not perfectly freed from the power of in-dwelling sin. In no case do they perfectly obey the law. Often they feel their hearts going out after things forbidden; often they feel a law in their members warring against the law of their mind, and bringing them into subjection to the law of sin in their members. Much sin cleaves to their best duties. How seldom do they rise on the wings of faith to devout and holy contemplation of eternal things! How weak their faith, how wavering their hope! How cold their love! How imperfect their devotional exercises! This life is a constant warfare, the flesh lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh. But the stroke of death, which consigns their bodies to the tomb, destroys the last of their spiritual foes. When the struggling soul bursts the bars of its prison, it leaves behind it all remaining imperfection; it wings its upward flight to the regions of perfect holiness. There, inbred corruption is unknown; there, temptation no longer annoys; nothing unholy or unclean disturbs the purity of the heavenly city, and there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie.

In the immediate presence of the blessed God, faith and hope shall attain perfection; for the one shall be changed into sight, and the other swallowed up in enjoyment. Sanctified knowledge shall supply abundant fuel to holy love, and it shall burn with a pure light and steady flame. There all, beholding with open face *the glory* of the Lord, shall be changed into the same

image from glory to glory. The glowing image of their Saviour, which shall shine in all the redeemed, shall prove them to be, indeed, members of his body, and proclaim the glory of that matchless grace which was able to exalt sinners to such dignity, and thus to adorn them with the beauties of holiness. We remark,

3d. The righteous shall be like God in *blessedness.* This necessarily results from the two last; for an enlarged view of the character and works of God, accompanied with perfect love to him, cannot but make the creature perfectly happy; accordingly the psalmist says: "In thy presence is fulness of joy, at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore."

Another point of resemblance between the future blessedness of the saints and that of God is in its duration; it will be eternal. Not, indeed, in the same manner; his blessedness is without beginning as well as without end. Theirs begins, but it will never end. It is dependent, too; but it depends upon the faithful promise of an unchanging God; and while his throne endures, his promise cannot fail. Such is the portion of the saints, such that likeness to God, the greatest and best of beings, which will hereafter exalt, adorn, and bless the poorest and the weakest of those who shall, through much tribulation, inherit the promise. But, though aided by the light of revelation, we can rudely trace the faint outlines of the beauteous picture, what human, what angelic pencil can fill them up, can give to each part the due proportions, and to all the proper coloring! The language of mortals is too feeble, the mind of man too weak, to conceive the joys which will fill the bosoms of the redeemed, when their knowledge of the most transporting truths shall be certain, distinct, and vastly enlarged, when their souls, unassailed by temptation, unstained by sin, shall shine in perfect

holiness and be *filled* with pure and unmixed delight, and the immutable God shall affix the seal of eternity to their happy state. Oh! it will be a gift worthy of him who spared not his only begotten Son, but delivered him up to shame, pain, and death. Glorious Redeemer! it will be a worthy reward of thy bloody agony, of thy prevalent intercession.

II. And now, beloved hearers, it seems almost needless to notice, under our second general head, the feelings of the blessed, *when* they enter upon this portion. Surely, they will feel that all their most enlarged desires are filled. Surely, the pious psalmist was not mistaken when he said, "*I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness.*" The desires of every human soul are large, too large for earth to fill; yet surely he who made the soul can satisfy its most boundless wishes.

The psalmist was a man of no common stamp; his natural powers were of no ordinary magnitude, and they had been enlarged by education and experience, and strengthened by frequent meditation on spiritual truth, and devout contemplation of eternal things; yet guided by the spirit of truth, he exclaims: "I shall be *satisfied* when I awake with thy likeness."

Oh, yes, my brethren, the likeness of God which it shall bear, will satisfy the pious soul, will fill up its capacities and wishes. And though its powers expand and expand to eternity, they will never swell beyond the measure of its joys. But when shall they enter upon this portion? When I awake, says the psalmist. Comparing the life and activity which shall animate the spirits of the blessed when they have shaken off this mortal coil, with their present dull and sluggish frame, or their present indistinct and transient views of the truth with the vivid and lasting impressions it will *make upon* them when seen in the light of eternity,

this life may well be called a sleep. And death, their Father's messenger, sent to awake them in the morning of their joys, or the expression, "when I awake," may refer more immediately to that bright morning when he who is the resurrection and the life, shall pour the light of heaven upon the darkness of the sepulchre; when, amid the convulsions of dissolving worlds, and the death groans of expiring nature, he shall call from the grave the sleeping dust of all his saints; when this corruption, shall put on incorruption and this mortal shall put on immortality, and death be swallowed up in victory; when their vile bodies, made like to the Saviour's, glorious and united to their glorified spirits, and they shall go to be for ever with the Lord.

From a review of this subject, let afflicted Christians learn patience and find consolation. David seems to have penned this psalm under great affliction; he was ready to sink in despondency while the waves of sorrow went over him, but he thought of the portion of the righteous, and his soul rose above the deep waters; he stood upon a rock where the angry billows could not reach.

The apostle Paul found consolation in the same truth: "For I judge that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

Nothing is better suited to administer comfort to the afflicted follower of Christ than steadfast and believing contemplation of those joys which await them.

Shall he murmur or repine, or indulge immoderate sorrow at the chastenings of his Heavenly Father, when they are designed to work out the peaceable fruits of righteousness, and to fit him for his crown; shall he faint under his present light afflictions which are but for a moment, but work out for him a far more exceed-

ing and eternal weight of glory. Lift up thy head, oh, weeping Christian! by faith behold thy bright inheritance in the skies, and let a song of praise to him, in whose likeness thou shalt awake, succeed thy tears!

Again, let Christians learn from this subject to rise above the fears of death. Is it so, that your souls will bear the Divine likeness when they awake from this dream of life? Is it so, that the hour of death will be the beginning of all that deserves the name of life?—the morning of a cloudless, an eternal day, in which knowledge, and holiness, and blessedness shall be made perfect? And can you fear to die? By virtue of your union to Christ all things are yours. Even death is yours; it will crown you with glory everlasting. Christless sinners may fear death. No wonder *they* should shudder at his approach. He is to them indeed the king of terrors; he cuts them off from all that is dear to them, defeats their plans, destroys their comforts, blasts their hopes, drives their trembling spirits to the bar of an angry Judge, shuts up their bodies in the grave, and opens to their souls the gates of the prison of the damned. But to believers he is a vanquished foe. He has lost his sting: "For the sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law, but thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord." Oh, Christians! be afraid to sin; be afraid to offend your covenant God; be afraid to dishonor your Saviour whose name you bear. But do not be afraid to die. Rather as servants, who love their master, be engaged in his service; be prepared to meet him, and look for and hasten to the coming of your Lord.

Finally, let me exhort all who hear me, to seek the portion of them that fear God. Is it not a glorious portion? Is it not worth seeking? Oh, make it yours; *it is offered* to you. Repent and be converted, and your

sins shall be blotted out. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved. Will you refuse to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness? Will you still spend money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which satisfieth not? There is another portion for the impenitent. Shall I name the dread alternative which awaits those who fall short of an inheritance among them that are sanctified? Shall I speak of the blackness of darkness for ever? Oh! be entreated, by all that is solemn and awful in eternity, by all that is desirable in the joys of Heaven, by all that is fearful in the agonies of hell; be entreated to seek the Lord. May God add his blessing. Amen.

SERMON IX.

THE END OF ALL THINGS AT HAND.

"The end of all things is at hand; be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer."—1 Peter iv. 7.

It is doubtful whether, in this passage, the apostle refers to the civil and ecclesiastical polity of the Jewish people, their priesthood, their temple service, their sacrifices, and the various rites and ceremonies of their law, which at the time of writing, were on the verge of dissolution, or whether in the expression, "the end of all things is at hand," he calls attention to the brevity and uncertainty of human life, the rapid flight of time, and the near approach of that solemn hour, when each of them must pass into the unseen world, appear at the bar of Omniscient truth and holiness, and enter upon the righteous retributions of eternity. As, however, this letter is addressed to believers in Pontus and Galatia, who, we may suppose, felt no special interest in the fate of Jerusalem, the latter interpretation of the text appears probable. In this sense, it is as applicable to us as to them; and it suggests instruction appropriate to the present occasion, when the termination of another year forcibly reminds us of the approaching close of all things earthly.

"The end of all things is at hand." This is literally true of all those objects which we see, or which are obvious to any of our senses. They are temporal; they have had a beginning, they shall have an end. The time was when they did not exist. The time is coming *when they* shall exist no longer. Travel back in

imagination and you come to that point in a past eternity, when the material universe sprang into being at the word of Omnipotence, when before there had been one vast unpeopled solitude, and the eternal God had reigned alone, self-sufficient and all sufficient. Travel forward in imagination, and you arrive at a period, when the same word that called them into existence, shall dissolve them into their original elements, or bid them cease to be. When that sun, which has beheld unchanged the rise and fall of so many empires, and shone with undiminished lustre on the graves of so many generations, shall emit its last expiring ray, and yonder stars that have twinkled from age to age shall be extinguished, and those heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll and pass away, and this earth and all that is therein, shall be burned up. The material universe, in all its beauty and grandeur, forms but a single link in the plans and purposes of that mysterious and adorable Being who is without beginning of days or end of time; and its whole duration is but a single step in the march of that government which is from everlasting to everlasting; and however remote the period may now seem, when the mighty angel coming down from heaven and standing on the sea and on the land, shall lift up his hand and swear by him who liveth for ever and ever that time shall be no longer; however numerous the generations of dying men that shall arise in succession and fill up their allotted term of probation, and pass on to their last account ere that period arrives; however dim and distant the solemnities of nature's dissolution may appear as you now look forward to them through the tract of coming ages, you shall see and feel them present, and when the notes of the last trump have ceased, and the last convulsive throes of a dying world are hushed, your souls, possess-

ing the very same consciousness of existence, the very same powers of thought and action, the very same capacities of joy and sorrow they now possess, shall look back upon the whole course of time from the creation to the judgment day, and feel that it bears a less proportion to that boundless eternity which there lies stretched out before you, than the year that is just closing to all that comes between it and the end of time. What a view does this give of the value of your souls! What energy does it impart to that question of the Son of God: "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul, or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" What wisdom does it accord to the choice of those who seek the salvation of their souls as the one thing needful. Of what guilt and folly does it convict you, who in spite of all the admonitions of the word of God and all the strivings of his spirit have persisted to this hour, in bartering your souls for what is offered you by a deceitful world and its lying pleasures that pall upon the sense, or wealth that will soon be wrested from your dying grasp, or honors, that if they fade not while you wear them, must soon deck your grave. Oh! immortal man, remember that thy soul must survive the wreck of matter and the crash of worlds; must feel itself just entering on its endless career of joy or sorrow, when time shall be no more, and earth andheaven have passed away. Remember the Eternal God hath made thee to be a monument of his justice, or his mercy, while his throne endures.

In the second place, the end of all things earthly is at hand, so far as *we* are concerned with them, or take an interest in them, because we shall soon leave them all behind. To each of us, brethren, the time is short. *Our days* are but an hand's breadth, and we spend them

as a tale that is told, as a dream when one awaketh. Like the swift ships they pass away; like the eagle hasting to his prey, leaving no trace behind. And when these bodies go down naked to the dust, in that very day every earthly thought perishes; that day will be to us the end of all things earthly. For there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave. But what is this to the many generations of men over whom time has passed in her rapid flight, bearing their spirits to the bar of God, and leaving their bodies in silence, darkness, and forgetfulness behind! What is this to thirty millions of our fellow men (or to the scores and hundreds from among ourselves), whom death has conducted to their unseen abodes, and God has fixed in their unalterable destinies, during the year that is just closed. Their pains and pleasures, their pursuits and attainments, their disappointments and successes, their honors, riches, joys, are at an end. Nothing earthly is left to them but the characters here formed, and the stores of mercy or of wrath here treasured up. They began the year with hopes as sanguine, prospects as bright, plans as discreet, and faculties as efficient as our own. But the places that once knew them, know them now no more. Strangers have entered into their possessions, and tread on their unconscious dust. And what are we? and what our life? A vapor appearing for a little, then vanishing away. The sun of prosperity may tinge it with gold, or paint upon it the colors of the rainbow. But lo! while men gaze it disappears. For us the graves are ready; the end of all things is at hand; and shall we long, and plan, and toil, only for this brief, uncertain life? Shall we devote ourselves to pursuits we must so soon abandon? Shall we heap up treasures in this world as if it were our eternal home, when we

know not at what moment we shall be summoned to bid a last adieu to all things earthly? We have arrived almost at the commencement of a new year; it will pass as swiftly and as silently as the past has, and at its close it will be said of some of us, they have gone to their last account! Thus it has been in the closing year, and the thing that hath been is that which shall be. Seats are now vacant in this house of God which, at the beginning of the year, were filled by some who were then present as we are now; and of some of us it is doubtless written in the secret purposes of Heaven, next year they shall die. Oh! that the conviction of our frailty, and of the brief, uncertain, period of our continuance on earth might even now penetrate our hearts, teaching us to rise in our desires, and hopes, and joys, above this dark scene of our temporary pilgrimage, and to live for God, for heaven, for immortality. Oh! that it might animate us even now to double diligence, fidelity, patience, self-denial, in doing and suffering our Master's will, that when the night cometh, in which no man can work, we may enter into rest, cheered by that joy inspiring testimonial of his gracious approbation, "well done, good and faithful servants, enter ye into the joy of your Lord."

In the third place, the end of all things is at hand, not only because an appointed day is hastening when this earth and you, hearers, shall pass away, and because we shall, long ere that day arrives, bid a last adieu to all things earthly, but also because all the objects of time and sense are frail and fluctuating; human society, in all its relations and interests, is full of change; and the world itself, with everything fair and excellent that it contains, is constantly fading and dying around us. The fashion of this world passeth away, saith the apostle. "Surely," saith the psalmist, "every man walk-

eth in a vain show, surely they are disquieted in vain; he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them." What striking illustrations of the fluctuating, changeful, and transitory nature of all things earthly, does the history of the year that is just closing furnish. Throughout the earth preparation has been making for the consummation of all things. All nature has grown old, and the processes which will ultimately reduce material things to their original elements have been steadily, though silently, progressive. Under the moral government of God, men have formed and developed their moral character, and thus have heaped up treasures for the last day, and ripened for the retributions of eternity. Some have cordially accepted God's offered mercy, given him their hearts, and been adopted into his redeemed family, and made heirs of an incorruptible inheritance. Others have rejected his gracious offers, hardened their hearts against the calls of his gospel, grieved away his blessed spirit, and provoked him to leave them to their own devices, and thus give them up to hopeless impenitence, and stamp them with the seal of reprobation. To the first, there is now no condemnation. They have seen the end of the guilt and power of sin. The darkness is already past, and the true light, the light of life, has begun to shine upon their souls, and it will brighten till it is lost in the effulgence of eternal day.

Of the others, it has been already written, "they are joined to idols, let them alone; they live, but it is to fill up the measure of their sins; they have seen the end of hope; they have passed beyond the reach of mercy." Others still, who have not yet attained to decisive piety or hopeless sin, have been steadily advancing towards one of these results. Not one of us has been stationary either in his progress toward eternity,

or in his preparation for the portion that awaits him there. The acts we have performed, the emotions we have cherished, the motives that have governed us, our privileges and opportunities of doing and receiving good are passed, and can never be recalled. The changes of condition and relations among men, which the last year has witnessed, have been not less than the changes of character. Some have risen to honor and affluence, while others have sunk into obscurity and poverty. Some have found settled homes and quiet habitations, while others have gone out from their peaceful abodes to wander among strangers, or are tossed upon the ocean. Intimate connexions, endeared friendships, have been formed, and they have been for ever broken off; new charms have been added to many a social circle, while many another has been invaded and robbed of its brightest ornament by relentless death. Plans and pursuits have been successful and abortive; hopes and fears have been realized or dissipated. All things have been full of change, and all those changes have now passed, never to return. The year on which we shall soon enter will resemble that which is just closing, in its varied and unlooked for changes, as in its rapid flight. Human life is like the ocean, it ebbs and flows; now its smooth and glassy surface reflects the heavens; now it heaves and tosses in restless and fitful agitations. Our plans, our pursuits, our connexions, our enjoyments, are like characters drawn upon the sand, when the next wave passes over and obliterates them for ever. All flesh is as grass, and all the goodliness thereof as the flower of grass; the grass withereth, the flower thereof fadeth; the wind passeth over it, and it is gone, and the place thereof shall know it no more. The end of all things is at hand.

And now, my brethren, what practical lessons ought we to learn from the view we have thus taken of ourselves, as dying creatures, and of this as a fading, dying world? Surely we ought to give heed to the exhortation of the Eternal Spirit addressed to us by the apostle. Be ye therefore sober and watch unto prayer. Shall we not subdue, and govern, and restrain, within the strictest bounds of temperance, those appetites and passions which belong only to these dying bodies, and which, if indulged, will destroy our souls? Shall not the reflection, that the end of all things is at hand, chill the fervors of the sensualist, and teach even ardent, impetuous youth, to check every sally of wayward passion? Do I address a son or daughter of pleasure, one who seeks happiness in the indulgence of appetite and passion? Pause, fellow sinner, while the last moments of the closing year yet linger; pause, and ask thyself, how has it been spent? What fruit have I gathered as it passed? What report has it borne to the bar of God? What influence has it exerted on my everlasting destinies? What record of it is now engraven on my conscience and written in the book of God? Ponder these questions, in the near view of that conflict with the last enemy which is drawing nigh, and that open grave into which thou art fast descending! Infatuated being! may God have mercy on thee, spare thee yet another year, and teach thee to act as becomes a rational, accountable, immortal man. But sobriety implies moderation in our desires, pursuits, and enjoyments of earthly good, as well as temperance. There are lessons here for the worldly minded, the votaries of wealth and honor. Oh! ye who thus labor for the meat that perisheth, the end of all things is at hand. Have you a covenant with death, that he will not take away your idols; or an agreement with the grave, that

it shall not swallow up your joys? Let the closing year admonish you that life draws near its close; that you are going out of the world naked as you entered it; that you are summoned to give in your last account before a judge who will favor you no more than the meanest beggar, or the poorest slave. Ah! how many years have you already wasted in the vain attempt to erect an edifice on ground that is sliding away beneath your feet. How long have you imitated him to whom God said, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee." Why will you act so foolish, so simple, so dangerous a part, when life and immortality are brought to light? When you are invited to seek durable riches, why spend ye money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which satisfieth not?

But the subject should teach us lessons of devotion as well as of soberness. Be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer. Oh! my friends, how near, how very near, are the dread realities of the eternal world; how thin the veil which separates us now from the world of spirits. And as time bears us onward, that distance is daily and hourly growing less, and death stands ready in a moment to draw aside that veil and usher us, disembodied spirits, into the immediate presence of the great and holy God! And shall we forget that awful eternity on whose very threshold we daily walk, or fail to recognise our relations to that adorable Being whose glorious perfections will so soon break, in unclouded splendor, upon our souls? Forbid it, reason, duty, conscience; forbid, Parent of our mercies. No: let us look at those things which are unseen and eternal; let us endure, as seeing him who is invisible; let us walk as pilgrims and strangers, feeling that we have here no abiding place, no continuing city; let us daily acknowledge our obligations to God, and our depend-

ence on him; let us daily seek his favor as life, and his loving kindness as better than life; let us watch against the fascinations of worldly pursuits and pleasures, and the deplorable proneness of our own hearts to bury themselves amid the transient concerns of this fleeting state. God has made us capable of knowing, loving, and obeying him, and of rising by his grace, and through the mediation of his Son, to the fellowship of angels, and the ennobling and everlasting joys of communion with himself. Be it ours to walk with him by faith in his Son, our Saviour, imploring the continual aid of his blessed Spirit to cherish in us childlike reverence, humility, love, obedience, and confidence, that, being found faithful in doing and suffering all his blessed will, we may enter into rest, and have it said of each of us, as of one of old, "He walked with God, and he was not, for God took him." Then, when we leave this dying world, and all its changing, fading scenes behind, we shall reach the end of our faith, and realize the consummation of our hopes.

SERMON X.

DEATH AND JUDGMENT.

"It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment."
—HEBREWS ix. 27.

TO-DAY, my friends, I am to speak to you of death and judgment; subjects not indeed new, but grand, affecting, and solemn; not unknown to you, but by many of you thoughtlessly neglected, by many of you studiously forgotten.

Oh! immortal beings, hastening to eternity, yet surrounded by objects of sense, and prone to be so fascinated by their fading splendor, that death and judgment steal unobserved upon them. That which reminds them of these great events can hardly be ill-timed. The present occasion, bringing to our recollection one who lately worshipped with us, but has now gone to that unseen world whence there is no return, renders meditation upon these themes peculiarly appropriate. Permit me, then, to call your attention to them as a dying man to his dying fellow men; as an accountable creature of God to those with whom he must shortly appear before him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. Do thou, all quickening Spirit, sole author of truth and holiness, breathe upon my soul, that I may speak truth only, and with a faithful application of it to myself; and shed thy gracious influences upon the hearts of this people that they may receive the truth in the love of it; grant thou the hearing ear, the understanding mind, *the applying* conscience, that the word may spring up

in their hearts and bear fruit unto eternal life, that so we may rejoice together in the great day of the Lord's appearing.

I am to speak of death: "It is appointed unto men once to die." Ah, who so mad as to doubt that he must die! Many of you *confess* that you are mortal, but live as though you would never die. How many of you are as much absorbed in the pursuit or the enjoyment of this world, as if this were the mansion of your eternal residence, not an inn where you can tarry but a night.

Consider, then, it is the appointment of the unchanging God that all men shall die. In the day that man sinned, God pronounced this affecting sentence: "Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return." Almighty power is pledged to carry the sentence into execution, and it cannot be resisted; it cannot fail. As the supreme moral Governor of the universe, God gives laws to his intelligent creatures, which it is possible for them to violate, as well as to obey; but as the Sovereign and uncontrollable disposer of life and death, there is none may stay his hand or say unto him, what doest thou? While we regard the operation of second causes which are obvious to our senses, we are apt to forget the great first cause from whom they derive all their efficiency. But let us ever bear in mind that if we must die, it is because he has so decreed. On account of our sin, let us know that he will bring us unto death, and to the hour appointed for all living. He has ordained that in our journey to the eternal world we should pass through the dark valley of the shadow of death. He has given to the King of terrors that commission to which all must bow. Look back now upon the history of past ages, and consider how uniformly the sentence of the Almighty hath been carried into execution. How many generations of men have lived

on earth from the days of our first parents to the present time. Each generation once as noisy and as bustling, as full of life and activity, of desire and hope, of business and pleasure, as that to which we belong. But where are they now? The decree of the Eternal God has gone into execution, and they have returned to the dust from which they were taken. On their plans, their pursuits, their pleasure, the grave has closed for ever. How long, think you, ere the present generation shall be numbered with those that have passed away? How long ere these bodies, cold and lifeless, shall repose beneath the clods of the valley? the bleak winds of winter howling over our graves: the men of other times trampling on the places where they lie, with as little concern as we now tread on the unconscious dust of our predecessors. How many of those whom we once knew have already gone down to the house appointed for all living? Where, my aged hearers, are the tender parents who cherished your helpless infancy? Where the playmates of your childhood, the companions of your youth, your associates in the cares, the business, and the pleasures of mature age? Where, my dear hearers of every age, are many whom we once knew and loved, and who seemed as likely to escape the stroke of death as we? The record of their kindness and friendship is yet fresh in the tablets of memory and imagination. We can still trace the well known features of each much loved form, but we see them no more, we hear them no more, we shall meet them no more until we meet them in those unseen abodes whither they have gone. We shall go to them, but they will return to us no more.

Yes, my friends, we live in a dying world. All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof as the flower of grass. The grass withereth and the flower thereof

falleth away. For what is our life; it is but a vapor that appeareth for a little and then vanisheth away. Our fellow men are continually dying around us, and ever and anon the messenger of the Almighty is sent to call away one and another from among ourselves.

The period which shall terminate our mortal course is already fixed, and each day, each hour, each moment, brings it nearer. This Sabbath past, and one less will remain to us on earth; and while I speak and while you listen, the time approaches when the cold finger o death shall stop your ears, and his icy touch shall stiffen my tongue; the seeds of decay and dissolution are sown thickly in these frail and dying bodies; toil and anxiety, sorrow and disease, weariness and pain—all serve to quicken and promote their vegetation, and to hasten the time when they shall bring forth fruit unto death. In many respects mankind differ; but in this all agree. The young, the old, the rich, the poor, the bond, the free, the wise and the foolish, the saint and the sinner, *all, all,* must die. All hasten to the grave, all must lie down in the dust, all must become the victims of corruption, and the food of worms.

But death is not only certain and universal, it is a most *solemn event.* Consider it only as the extinction of life, and what can be more affecting. There is something in man that clings instinctively to life, that shrinks away from the cold embrace of death; so that, however wretched men may be, and however regardless of futurity, few are willing deliberately to lay it down. The consciousness of a good cause and the firm hope of a blessed immortality, have often led to a calm and joyful sacrifice of life itself; but where these are wanting, it has seldom been made except in the transports of passion, the delirium of madness, or the gloom of despair.

Who can think, without emotion, of all the changes which death makes in these bodies, of all the symptoms which precede, the circumstances which attend, and the consequences which follow it? How strength, activity, and beauty wither at his approach; how the heart ceases to beat, the lungs to play, the blood to circulate; how the check fades, the eye is dimmed of its lustre, the countenance robbed of its expression, the brow moistened by the cold dews which congeal upon it, passion is extinguished, sense and motion are destroyed, corruption begins its work, and the cold and silent grave closes upon its victim.

These are affecting, but when we consider that death makes a final separation between us and every earthly object; that he takes us away from the friends we love, the pursuits we delight in, the hopes we cherish, the pleasures we seek; that he removes us from all the well known realities of life; that he leads us to the brink of a precipice, beyond which all is dark and silent, down which though thousands leap, yet each must leap alone, and none return to tell us what lies beyond. We may well say it is a most solemn thing to die. But what makes it so? It is not the sad retinue of circumstances which precede, attend, and follow the extinction of life in these mortal bodies; it is not the convulsive struggle in which life and death contend for the mastery, and life is overpowered and death prevails; it is not the shroud, the coffin, or the grave, cold, dark, and silent as it is. No, it is none of these that gives to death its deepest interest, its most awful solemnity. But when we look upon it as the dissolution of the union between the mortal body and the immortal spirit, which now inhabits it, as the close of our probationary state, as the sentence of the Eternal *Judge* sealing up our characters, and summoning us

away to give an account of the deeds done in the body; then, indeed, it appears to be one of the most momentous eras of our existence; one of the most awful changes which can ever pass over us. Death unveils to the immortal spirit all the dread realities of the invisible world; he conducts it to the bar of the great God; he ushers it into the retributions of eternity; for as it is appointed to men "once to die, so after this the judgment." The Bible teaches us that death fixes unchangeably the character and the destiny of the evil and the good, that from the struggles of dissolution, the wicked go away to the prison of eternal justice, and the righteous are at once conveyed to the joys and the blessedness of Paradise. In this allotment of their different portions, a divine sentence is virtually passed on every individual. But it teaches also that a day is fixed at the close of the present dispensation, when, to manifest the wisdom and goodness of God in his government of this world, and to bring to a consummation all his purposes of justice and mercy, there shall be a general judgment.

This it is that is spoken of in the text as coming after death; not that it follows it immediately, but most certainly; and because in judgment every man must appear, *and receive his final sentence, in the character he bore when he died.* To this judgment to come, let us now direct our attention.

Admit the being and perfections of God, and no doctrine of natural religion can be more clearly seen by the light of nature. The wisdom, the goodness, the justice, the truth of God, all demand it, as their only vindication from the charges which the inequality and imperfection of the dispensations of Divine Providence in the present life, would otherwise seem to fix upon them. Reason, conscience, and the universal consent

of mankind in every age and country, bear testimony to it in the most positive manner. But why do I appeal to them, when we have in our hands the sure word of the living God? God hath spoken, and what he reveals on this subject commends itself to the conscience of every honest man. He hath assured us that "he will bring every work into judgment with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil;" that the time is already fixed, the circumstances are already arranged, and that as surely as men must once die, so surely after this they must be judged. The same God, my friends, who has decreed that you shall die, has decreed also that you shall go to judgment. You can no more escape the one, than you can avoid the other. In the execution of a part of the decree, behold a pledge that the whole shall be fulfilled. The sacred Scriptures give us much interesting information concerning this grand and awful event. They teach that the Judge who, in that solemn day, shall fix the everlasting destinies of men, shall be no other than the Saviour of sinners, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Mediator of the covenant of grace, uniting in his own person supreme Divinity with perfect humanity. And who so proper to settle finally the concerns of this world, as he whose interest and honor are most intimately connected with it? Who so fit to bestow eternal life on his humble followers as he who lived and died for their salvation, and to pronounce the final sentence of eternal death on the impenitent and unbelieving as he whose gracious offers they have neglected, whose dying love they have despised? Jesus Christ shall judge the living and the dead at his appearing and kingdom. But oh! how unlike the man of sorrow, how changed since his soul was exceeding sorrowful even unto death, he lay *prostrate* in Gethsemane under the burden of our guilt;

exhausted by suffering, he fainted as he bore his cross up the hill of Calvary, and on the cross he cried out as one most desolate, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me," Behold he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him. "The Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory. And I saw, saith John, a great white throne and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heavens fled away, and there was found no place for them." But who may describe the glory of his appearing? Heaven and earth shall own a present God. He shall speak, and all that are in their graves shall hear his voice and come forth, they that have done good to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation. Death shall throw open his prison doors, and release his captives. The sea shall give up the dead that are in it, and death and hell shall deliver up the dead who are in them, and the dead, small and great, shall stand before God. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the dead shall be raised and the living shall be changed.

Before him shall be gathered all nations. We must *all* appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in the body according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Of all the descendants of Adam, not one shall be forgotten, from the first of our fallen race who died by a brother's hand, to the last infant whose earliest slumbers in a mother's arms shall be wakened by the thunders of that day!

What a vast assembly! yet each individual shall feel that his concern in the transactions of that day is personal. Each one shall feel as if the eye of the Judge were fixed on him alone, and all the unnumbered mil-

lions were collected to be spectators of his doom. Oh! my God, each one of us shall be there. Before thine awful bar each one of us shall lift up his head, waiting with more than mortal transport for his redemption, which draweth nigh, or in wild despair shall cry, and cry in vain: "Mountains fall on us, rocks cover us from the face of the Lamb, for the great day of his wrath is come, and who is able to stand!"

Every one of us must give account of himself unto God. Then shall the books be opened, and the dead judged out of the things written in the books, according to their works. What hidden things shall then be revealed! what secret things be brought to light! For God will bring *every* work into judgment, and every secret thing, whether it be good or evil. *Now* the omniscient eye of the Judge is upon us; *now* it reaches the deepest and darkest recesses of our souls; *now* it penetrates our bosoms, discerns all our motives, lays bare the most hidden springs of our conduct. Our own consciences now record every action, every word, every feeling, every thought. In the day of judgment, the book of conscience and the book of God's omniscience shall be opened, their contents published to an assembled universe, to justify that sentence which shall be passed on every one according to his works. Oh! if ye have not fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before you in the gospel; if your sins have not been washed away in a Saviour's blood, and your souls clothed in a Saviour's righteousness, how can ye bear the disclosures of that day! Whatever may be your lives, you know, my dear brethren, that your hearts are by nature far from God, full of all pride, of forgetfulness of God, of ingratitude for his mercies, of dislike to his worship, and disobedience to his law. Oh! fly,

fly to the atoning blood of Christ, lest death and judgment overtake you in your sins.

Then the character of every man shall be fully disclosed, and compared with the holy law of God; and it shall appear that by the deeds of the law, no flesh can be justified in the sight of God. Then it shall be manifest, that if men must stand or fall according to their own merits, one sweeping sentence of condemnation must consign every individual to eternal sorrow. But another book shall be opened, which is the book of life. Then shall the inquiry be made, who are united to the Lord Jesus? who have a right to plead for pardon *through* his atoning sufferings and death, for eternal life, *through* his meritorious and perfect righteousness? I tell you, my dear friends, not every one who now calls himself a Christian, not every one who says "Lord, Lord," shall be accepted of him. "In that day," saith he, "many will say unto me, Lord, Lord, and then I will profess unto them I never knew you; depart from me ye that work iniquity." The fruits of the spirit shall then be sought after, as the evidence that the spirit of Christ has dwelt in those who named his name; for if any man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of his. The work of faith shall then be sought as the evidence of its genuineness. The *lives* of professing Christians shall then be the test by which the sincerity of the profession shall be tried. And thus, while the rich reward shall be wholly of free grace, it shall be according to every man's work. In that day, many a poor sufferer, who, in deep obscurity, has lived a life of faith and prayer, who has walked humbly with his God, and bowed in meek submission to the hardships of his lot, shall be owned as a son by the King of Kings and Lord of Lords; while the self-righteous Pharisee, or the licentious Antinomian, shall have his portion as-

signed him with evil doers, where is weeping and wailing, and gnashing of teeth. But if strict scrutiny shall be made among the professed followers of Christ, what shall be the end of those who have never named his name? of the gay, the worldly, the dissipated, the profane, the scoffing? If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? Momentous question. Listen, I pray you, to the answer of your own consciences and the Word of God. And now when the awful inquiry is ended, when the wicked are separated from among the just, when all the friends of Christ are gathered upon his right hand, and all his enemies upon the left, then shall the King say to them on his right hand, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Then shall he say also to them on his left hand, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels; and these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." I give you the final sentence, my hearers, in the words of Christ himself; words which you and I must hear at that coming day; and I will attempt to explain them. *Everlasting punishment! Eternal life!* weighty, incomprehensible words! Whose mind can scan their extent? whose imagination can grasp their import? Oh, Eternity! mysterious, awful, unknown. Thou only canst teach their full meaning to created minds, as thy successive ages roll on in their endless course they shall unfold it, but never, never, shall it be exhausted!

My dear hearers, *to you* it is appointed once to die, but after this the judgment. Yet a little while and those eyes shall be closed for ever on all earthly scenes; that beating pulse shall cease; those bodies, cold, motionless, and insensible, shall be wrapped in the shroud,

shut up in the coffin, or deposited in the grave. Those immortal spirits shall behold around them the dread realities of the invisible world; shall feel that the eye of the great God is fixed upon them, and know themselves to be children of his love and heirs of his favor; or children of disobedience and heirs of perdition. A little longer—a very little compared with the eternity of God or the immortal existence of the soul—and the voice of the Son of God shall awaken those bodies from the sleep of death, and, rising from the opening grave, they shall meet those souls called by the same powerful voice from the mansions of the blessed or the prison of despair, where they had waited, in joyful hope or trembling horror, the morning of the resurrection, and be again united to them. Then shall ye behold the earth wrapped in the fires of final conflagration, all nature struggling in the last agonies of dissolution, the sun turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, and through yon opening heavens the Son of God descending in all his Father's glory, thousand thousands ministering unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand round about him. Then must *you* stand at his tribunal, and hear from his lips that sentence which, according to the deeds done in the body, shall fix your destiny unchangeably and for ever. Look forward to those solemn scenes which lie before you. Are you prepared for them? Oh! let the question come home to your consciences. What will it avail to put it from you? Will that alter it? No. You may forget it, you may deny it, you may even scoff at it, still it is true. God hath appointed unto you once to die, and after this the judgment. It is the counsel of the Lord, and it shall stand, it cannot fail. Are you prepared for it? The Bible teaches what a preparation is: believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and ye shall be saved;

repent ye and be converted, and your sins shall be blotted out; he that believeth not shall be damned; except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish; follow holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. Have you been converted? Are you true penitents? Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ? And the lives which ye now live in the flesh, do ye live by the faith of the Son of God who loved you and gave himself for you? Happy if this be, indeed, your character. For you, then, death has no terrors; he has been conquered; he has been disarmed by the great Captain of your salvation; for you the grave is the bed of peaceful repose, from which you shall awake with joy in the bright morning of the resurrection. To you all the solemnities of judgment, though awful, shall yet be pleasing; amid all the majesty of the Judge, you shall recognise your kind, and compassionate, and loving Redeemer; he will own you as his; and having overcome you, shall sit down with him on his throne, even as he overcame, and is sat down with his Father on his throne. Wherefore, beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

If this be not your character, I call upon you, my dear hearers, by all the solemnities of death, of judgment, and eternity, to repent of your sins, and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ without delay. As an ambassador of Christ, as though God did beseech you, I pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. As a dying fellow creature, who must soon meet you in eternity, I entreat, I adjure you, by all that is sacred, prepare to meet thy God.

SERMON XI.

PEACE IN DEATH.

"And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."—Acts vii. 59.

THE narrative of the death of Stephen, the first disciple of the Lord Jesus who suffered martyrdom for his fidelity and affection to his master, is highly interesting and instructive. It affords, on the one hand, a striking proof of the depravity and blindness of fallen man, and an awful example of the lengths to which men may be carried in impiety and unrighteousness, by prejudice and bigotry, under the specious pretence of zeal for religion; and on the other, a glorious illustration of the excellence of the Gospel of Christ, and its power to fill the soul with the most pure and ardent love to God and man, and to raise it quite above the dread of danger and the sense of suffering, and enable it, in the most trying circumstances, to rejoice in God with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

We first hear of Stephen in the sixth chapter of Acts, where we are told he was chosen one of the seven deacons, who were appointed to attend to the temporal concerns of the church. He is there termed "a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost." In the latter part of the sixth chapter, we are told that Stephen wrought great miracles among the people, and that certain men belonging to a synagogue of unconverted Jews, undertook to dispute with him and refute his doctrine. But they soon found themselves unequal to the task, for

they could not resist the wisdom and power with which he bore testimony to the divine mission, character, and doctrines of his Master. Too full of prejudice and pride to receive the truth with candor, they were inflamed with rage against the man who had thus put them to silence, and sought to take his life. To accomplish their atrocious design, they resorted to falsehood and perjury. They suborned witnesses to testify that he had spoken blasphemy against Moses and against God. This charge, sufficient under any circumstances to rouse the blind zeal and bigotry of the people, was doubly efficacious when alleged against one already obnoxious to their rulers and teachers as a bold and powerful assertor of the Messiahship of Jesus whom they had recently crucified. A tumultuous assemblage of all ranks immediately collected, and seizing upon Stephen, they bore him violently into the apartment of the temple in which the great council of the nation usually sat, and there called on him to answer to the charge. This he did in a speech of considerable length, evidently designed to prove, from their own history, that God never meant the ceremonial law and the temple service to be perpetual; that their rejection of Jesus Christ did not in the least invalidate his claims; and that, in opposing him, they were exposing themselves to imminent danger of destruction by the judgments of the Almighty. But while he kept these objects in view, he saw that their feelings were such, that he would not be suffered to speak if he declared his intentions, and accordingly he did not apply his argument as he went along, but simply stated known facts, designing, no doubt, to point out the conclusion to which they led, had he been permitted to finish his speech. As he proceeded, they saw more and more clearly the tendency *of his* arguments; and their passions rose to such a

height, that he was forced to break off abruptly before he had completed his address. While he did this, he reproved them in the most bold, faithful, and energetic manner, for their unbelief and obduracy, their persecutions of the prophets in violations of their own law, and above all, their recent guilt in betraying and murdering the Just One, to whom Moses in the law and all the prophets bear witness. To the truth of this charge, their own consciences bore testimony, and they were cut to the heart. Convicted of guilt, and stung with remorse, yet they were too proud and obdurate to repent and seek forgiveness, and they turned all their rage upon the man whose keen reproofs had pierced them with such anguish.

Exasperated beyond bounds, they lost all self-command, and gnashed upon him with their teeth. In this trying moment, the master whom he loved did not forsake his faithful servant. Full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, Stephen looked up steadfastly to Heaven, as if calling upon God to bear witness to the truths he had declared, to give him strength to seal his testimony with his blood, and to reverse the unrighteous decision of his enemies; when, behold, by a miraculous operation of Divine power upon his mind, he had a lively exhibition of the glory of the invisible God, and Jesus, whom he loved, shining in celestial radiance at the right of the Majesty on high, *standing* as if he had just risen from his throne to witness, encourage, and to receive his servant. In an ecstasy of joy and wonder he exclaimed: "Behold, I see the Heaven opened, and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God. He whom ye condemned and crucified, reigns, and shall ever reign to save his people and to execute judgment on his enemies." This was more than they could bear. Stopping their ears that they might hear no more on

this hated subject, and drowning his voice in a loud cry of rage and horror, they rushed upon him, and encouraging one another in their bloody work, they thrust him violently out of the city, that it might not be polluted by his blood, and as soon as they had got beyond its limits, with one accord they stoned him to death. And now, what a contrast was exhibited between the spirit of the world and the spirit of Jesus Christ! Behold the frantic multitude, hurrying along their victim to the place where they might glut their vengeance with his blood, every countenance distorted with rage, every voice hoarse with passion, every motion indicating the fell demon of cruelty and malice which had taken full possession of their souls. Turn now to the disciple of Jesus; see him serene and tranquil amid the bursting tempest, his countenance beaming peace, and love, and joy, his attention fixed, his mind absorbed, in those bright and beatific visions which opened upon him, rapt in the fervors of devotion, and alone with God as if he had been in his closet; his glad soul exulting at his departure, rising in the strength and beauty of his Redeemer to shake off the dust of earth and the dew of death, and soar on seraph pinions to the bosom of his Saviour and his God. See *them* as they pass the city walls, rushing with savage eagerness upon their victim, loading him with execrations, and vieing with each other in the work of death, and when their work is done, gazing with fiend-like exultation on the ghastly mangled object of their rage, retiring slowly and sullenly, their hands stained with the blood of innocence, the guilt of murder on their souls, to meditate on what they had done, to feel shame and the dread of a coming judgment as passion subsides, to writhe under the upbraidings of a guilty conscience. Behold the blessed martyr recalled to the recollection of what was passing

around him, by the power of his enemies when they had come to the place of execution; first, calmly committing his spirit to that Saviour who had redeemed him by his blood, whose glories he beheld, for whose sake he died. There, as one, whose last petition for himself was granted, kneeling down, praying with his dying breath that the sin of his murderers might be forgiven, he sweetly falls asleep in Jesus, to awake in the likeness of God and be for ever with his Lord. What a triumph of the gospel! How closely did the disciple copy the example of his Master! By the promises of the gospel men are said to be partakers of the *divine nature*, and here it is exemplified. Here is *God-like* love to enemies. How peaceful was the martyr's end. "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace;" whether like the good old patriarch, he die in his bed with his children around him, or, like Stephen, in the hands of men of violence and blood. But the enemies of the Lord Jesus, the persecutors of his servant—how wretched as well as guilty were they? Surely the wicked are like the troubled sea which cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.

The words of our text, the last prayer which Stephen offered for himself, suggest a number of interesting and important remarks. To some of them let me now call your attention; and, First, they teach us the supreme divinity of our Lord and Saviour; that Jesus Christ is God.

No sin is more frequently and more severely condemned in the Scriptures than idolatry, or giving to creatures that religious worship which is due to God alone. Of this, every one who reads the Bible must be fully aware. It is written in Deuteronomy, and

again quoted by our Saviour: "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him *only* shalt thou serve." The angel forbade John to worship him, saying: "See thou do it not; worship God." By Isaiah we are commanded: "Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself, and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread;" and in Exodus God saith: "Thou shalt worship no other God; for Jehovah, whose name is jealous, is a jealous God." But here we behold Stephen, the first martyr—a man eminently favored of God, full of faith and of the Holy Ghost,—in the most solemn moment of his existence, in the full assurance of faith, with the Heavens open to his view, offering to the Lord Jesus his last act of religious worship on earth, presenting his last prayer to him. Was he, indeed, worshipping a creature? Was he guilty of idolatry while inspired by the Holy Ghost; while the visions of God beamed upon his soul; while he stood in the threshold of Heaven, with the full assurance of an immediate admission there? If he was not, then Jesus Christ is God.

Consider what he prays for: "Lord, receive my spirit; Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." The first petition embraces the highest personal benefit for which prayer can be offered—the eternal salvation of the soul. Can any but God save the soul? Can anything short of almighty power, and infinite wisdom and goodness, make the immortal spirit for ever holy and happy? Stephen asks this favor of Jesus Christ. Was he not sure that *he* possessed those divine perfections, and was able to grant what he asked? Again: he prays that his enemies may not be finally condemned for the sin of murdering him. Does he not then attribute to Christ the power of forgiving or condemning these murderers? But who can forgive sin but God? Can we conceive a higher act of worship than this; or

an occasion more solemn; or a person better qualified to worship aright; or a more satisfactory evidence of acceptance? Stephen offers to Christ the very prayer which Jesus, on the cross, had offered to the Father. He worships Christ, therefore, just as Christ worshipped the Father! And is not Jesus Christ God? Nor is this instance of religious worship offered to the Lord Jesus a singular one. The Church is frequently distinguished in the New Testament by the title of those who call upon, or worship, the Lord Jesus. Prophets and apostles are represented as worshipping him. Nay, the Father saith, when he bringeth in the first begotten into the world: "Let all the angels of God worship *him.*" And John saw, in the Apocalypse, the whole church of the redeemed on high, and all the angels round about the throne worshipping the Lamb, and ascribing to him power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and glory, and honor, and blessing. Were all these idolaters? Have men, full of faith and the Holy Ghost, violated, through life and in death, the first commandment of Jehovah, "Thou shalt have no other God before me?"—If Christ is not God, if he is not Jehovah, they have. Is there idolatry in Heaven?—If Christ is not God, there is. But if this cannot be, then is Jesus Christ the true God and eternal life. The blessed martyr was not mistaken. Prophets and apostles, and holy men of God, were not mistaken. That pure and happy company who encircle the throne on high with unceasing songs, who see, face to face, and know even as they are known, are not in sin and error. Jesus Christ is God; infinite in being and in blessedness; supreme, independent, eternal. In this faith let me live; and when my soul shall stretch her wings for that world which lies beyond the grave, may I have grace, like Stephen, to commit my eternal all to him.

and to rely on his infinite power, and wisdom, and goodness, for my salvation.

In the second place, we learn from this prayer of Stephen, that the souls of believers, at their death, go immediately to be with Christ. They do not sleep, as some have thought, inactive and unconscious until the resurrection of the body; nor do they pass through purgatorial fires according to the dreams of others—for the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth them from all sin; nor are they reserved in an abode distinct from the highest heaven, in some place of rest where they are kept until the day of judgment, by some called the hades of the happy; but they go directly to heaven itself, to the immediate presence of the blessed God, to be with the glorified human nature of their beloved Lord. Before his crucifixion, Christ said to his afflicted disciples: "In my Father's house are many mansions; I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." After his resurrection, he explained his meaning more fully: "Go to my brethren," said he to Mary, "and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God." There Stephen now beheld him: "I see Heaven opened, and the Son of Man, the glorified human nature of my Redeemer, standing on the right hand of God." Transported with the view of those glories which he saw, he prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." What is the meaning of this prayer, offered under these circumstances? Is it not, receive my spirit, to be with thee in that glory which I now behold; to be with thee in heaven, at the right hand of God? And this prayer he offered up while filled with the Holy Ghost. It was, therefore, agreeable to the will of God, and no doubt it was granted. The same truth

Christ teaches in his promise to the penitent thief upon the cross—"To-day thou shalt be *with me* in Paradise." In the faith of this, Paul desired to depart and be with Christ, as far better than to remain in the church on earth; and he and his brethren were willing rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord. Yes, my brethren, when the body falls asleep in Jesus, the rejoicing spirit of the believer goes at once to be with Christ, to behold his glory, with no interposing veil; to be perfectly conformed to his likeness; and to enjoy a blissful and everlasting communion and fellowship with him in his Father's house on high. Oh! who can describe the change as it is experienced by the departing follower of Jesus. How, as the last convulsive struggles announce the dissolution of this mortal body, the freed spirit rejoices in the full possession of life that knows no decay; how, as the visions of time are shut out for ever from the eye closing in death, the realities of eternity break upon the soul in unclouded glory; as the last sighs and groans of this vale of tears die upon the ear, the soul is ravished by the melody of heaven, and welcomed by those who have gone before, to join in their everlasting songs. As death, with unpitying hand, breaks the last tie by which she was bound to earth, she feels herself united, indissolubly and for ever, to that Redeemer whom, while yet unseen, she loved, and believing in whom, she rejoiced even here with joy unspeakable and full of glory. "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord; yea, saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labors, and their works do follow them."

A third remark, suggested by the words of our text, in connexion with the circumstances in which they were uttered, is this: Faith in Christ yields support and comfort in a dying hour. None of us may be called to suf-

fer martyrdom for the truth; none of us may die by the hand of violence; yet we must all bow to the stroke of death; and the conflict with the last enemy, whatever may be its attendant circumstances, is fearful and trying beyond expression. Surround the dying man with all that ingenuity and wealth can provide, soothe him with all the tender assiduities of friendship and affection, exhaust every source of consolation which reason and philosophy can suggest, how unavailing are all these to relieve his pains or to dispel the gloom that gathers round his soul as his departure draws nigh. He is leaving all that he has loved or known; he is sinking under a burden that grows heavier every moment, in spite of the convulsive struggles of nature to throw it off. A mortal chill creeps over his extremities and approaches his heart; before him all is dark and silent at the best; from that world to which he goes, none have returned to give him information; nor can any accompany him on his journey thither; he is on the brink of a precipice, where all below and beyond is covered with impenetrable gloom; on its crumbling verge he ponders with unutterable solicitude the destinies that await him. Shall his spirit rise buoyant above it to the regions of eternal day, or plunge into an ocean of sorrow and despair? Reason cannot answer: philosophy is dumb. The dying man shrinks back from the dark, untried abyss; but an invisible power urges him onward; he shudders and leaps headlong; and his destiny is fixed for ever. But in the Gospel, life and immortality are brought to light. The lamp of revelation sheds celestial light on the otherwise impervious gloom that shrouds the entrance of eternity. The eye of faith can penetrate the dark chambers of the sepulchre, and descry beyond the holy, happy mansions of the blest. *There she sees* the general assembly, and church of the

first born, the spirits of just men made perfect, Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and God the judge of all, confiding in the blood of sprinkling, which cleanseth from all sin, and filled with the spirit of adoption, which crieth Abba Father; the soul rests in the faithful promises of a gracious God, and calmly waits the coming of her last enemy, or hastens exulting to the conflict, assured of being made more than a conqueror through him who loved us and gave himself for us; and exclaiming, in anticipated triumph, "Oh! death, where is thy sting! Oh! grave, where is thy victory!" How tranquil, how triumphant, was the death of Stephen! Though no earthly friend was near to soothe his pains, or whisper words of kindness, or close his eyes in death; though vindictive passion glared upon him from every countenance about him; though he heard only reproaches and execrations, and sank beneath repeated blows from the hand of cruelty and violence; yet, being full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, he saw Heaven opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God; he saw himself surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses, sympathizing in his sufferings, approving his fidelity, and waiting to hail him as a conqueror. He beheld Jesus, the great Captain of his salvation, smiling with divine complacency upon his servant, holding forth the incorruptible crown, and cheering him with the promise, "my grace is sufficient for thee; to him that overcometh will I grant to sit down with me upon my throne, even as I overcame and have sat down with my Father upon his throne; be faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." And think you he would have exchanged situations with the most powerful and prosperous of his persecutors? Oh! no. The place of his martyrdom was to him the threshold of heaven. From that enraged cir-

cle of bloody men he passed to join the great company of the redeemed in the paradise on high; and after a few pains and dying struggles, he entered the Heavenly Zion with songs and everlasting joy.

Thus does faith support the believer in the hour of death. Thus Paul could say when in prison, and in daily expectation of martyrdom, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand." Thus that blessed company, who loved not their lives unto death, overcame. We must die. Would ye die in peace? Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the last place, we may learn from this example of Stephen, that Jesus Christ abundantly rewards those who suffer for his sake. It is required of all who would be his disciples, to forsake all and follow him; to deny themselves and take up the cross daily; to love him more than they love houses or lands, or the dearest earthly friends, or life itself. In the first ages of the Church, his followers were often called to make every sacrifice, nay, not unfrequently to endure the most excruciating and unheard of sufferings for his sake. And the spirit of his religion is still the same. We cannot be his disciples in truth without making sacrifices of much that the world counts dear, much that the unrenewed heart prizes highly, and clings to with tenacity. Let none think to follow a man of sorrows without suffering; let none hope to live godly in Christ Jesus without tribulation. Yet the same voice which says "forsake all and follow me," saith also, "There is no man that hath left home, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come, life everlasting." "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you *falsely for* my sake; rejoice and be exceeding glad, for

great is your reward in Heaven." "If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him." "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." And have not these promises been found faithful? Did not Stephen find them so? Were they not found so by the multitude who, in the first ages, sealed their testimony with their blood? Why, then, did they so cheerfully meet danger and death? Why did they even court the martyr's stake, that they might gain the martyr's crown? Having these promises, dearly beloved, let us hold fast our profession, nothing wavering; for if we honor Christ in our lives, we need have no fear that he will forsake us in the trying hour of death.

SERMON XII.

THE UNREASONABLENESS, GUILT, AND DANGER OF INDECISION.

"And Elijah came unto all the people and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, follow him."—1 KINGS xviii. 21.

BAAL was the name of an idol god, much worshipped by the heathen nations round about Judea. At the time the text was uttered by Elijah, very many, though not all of the people of the ten tribes who formed the kingdom of Israel, under the influence of their heathen neighbors, and greatly strengthened by the example of their own ungodly rulers, had forsaken the altars of Jehovah, and bowed the knee before this false god. Yet they could not rest perfectly satisfied in their idolatry. The instructions they had received in former years, respecting the true God; the influence of those among them who still worshipped Jehovah; and more especially certain remarkable events which had recently occurred, or were then taking place, made them feel ill at ease in their service of Baal; and conscience, at length aroused, warned them of their sin in forsaking the worship of the God of their fathers. They were undecided as to the course which they should pursue, and this was the occasion which called forth from Elijah the expostulation of the text: "How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him."

Indecision in religious matters, is an evil no less *common* now than in the days of Elijah; and now, as

then, involves those chargeable with it in guilt, and exposes them to ruin. In the spirit of the text, it is my wish to-day to expostulate with those who in this congregation, are, like Israel of old, "halting between two opinions," and show them the unreasonableness, the sin, and the danger of their indecision.

I. Let me address myself to those whose minds are not fully made up as to the truth and importance of religion—that religion of the heart which leads a sinner to devote himself to the service of Christ. To this class belong many of those who are commonly styled Infidels, and not a few who rank among Unitarians and Universalists. For the most part, such persons are very far from professing that firm and fearless confidence in the truth of their professed opinions, for which they wish others to give them credit. No man who hears the gospel, can be *certain* that it is not true: because no man can refute the evidence by which it is supported; and, until that is done, all the objections urged against it, may prove groundless. The bare possibility that the gospel may prove to be the word of Almighty God, must make every reflecting person who neglects it, sometimes tremble, lest, when it is too late, he may discover its truth to his eternal cost. Our everlasting destinies are too solemn, to be left in any uncertainty. Heaven and hell are matters too awfully momentous, to permit any one to reflect, without concern, on the bare possibility that he may at last be shut out of Heaven, and be shut up in hell. Only those whom ignorance or stupidity shield against conviction, and the unhappy men who by an obstinate rejection of truth and neglect of known duty, have provoked God to give them up to hardness of heart and blindness of mind—only such, have made the fatal attainment of

living perfectly at ease in the neglect of religion, and wholly exempt from believing fears.

With most, who affect to laugh at experimental religion, as enthusiasm or folly, the case is quite different. They know that the Bible condemns the pursuits and pleasures which they love, and they wish it were not true; or, vain of their understanding, they would seem wiser than other men—superior to vulgar prejudices; and would have us think that they have broken the shackles by which inferior minds are bound; and thus they add hypocrisy to their sin, and glory in their shame. But though reason may be misled by passion or hoodwinked by vanity, there are moments when the truth forces itself upon their attention, when conscience starts from her slumbers, and "the word of God, the sword of the Spirit," makes its keen edge felt. It is because they are thus disturbed, that they seek so industriously for objections against religion; that they rail at its doctrines as irrational, at its precepts as severe, at its mysteries as incredible. Hence, too, their eagerness to make proselytes to their own opinions, and their anxiety lest any of their companions should yield to the force of truth and leave them. They feel insecure; they are not quite honest in their professed disregard of religion; their loudest scoffs are sometimes meant to hide their fears. Could you look into their hearts, you would find that they are not willing to die until they have changed their opinions and practices; or, at the least, not until they have examined the whole subject more thoroughly. Their true condition is that described in the text; they are "halting between two opinions."

Is there one of this class within the sound of my voice? Let me speak with you, my friend, on the *unreasonableness* of your conduct. You admit, that it is

possible, at the least, that the Bible may be true; that it is possible that by neglecting the religion which it teaches, you may plunge yourself into endless sorrow, whilst by giving it your attention you may gain eternal life. You admit, that the time and attention which would be required to come to an intelligent decision respecting its claims, are as nothing when compared with the possible evils to be avoided and the possible blessings to be obtained. Is not, then, your present undecided course unreasonable? The subject is too interesting, too momentous to be left in any uncertainty. Where the soul is concerned, and when eternity is at stake, indecision is infatuation. How can you be at your ease, when, for aught you certainly know, every step you take leads to despair and death, and the blackness of darkness for ever?

Your indecision is *criminal* as well as unreasonable. If the religion of the Bible be true, it ought to control your whole conduct and character; and he whom it claims as its author has laid upon you an obligation, the propriety of which your own reason admits, to give it your first attention. In such circumstances, are you not guilty of a sin against God, in habitually treating religion as if it were false, when you are not sure but it may be true? Are you not guilty of a sin against your neighbor, in leading him to think you at ease in your rejection of the claims of religion, when you well know that you are not so? Are you not guilty of a sin against your own soul, when you make it more and more your interest to disbelieve what you are compelled to confess may be true, and what, if it be true, is to you all-important? Will you suffer your passions and your pride to interfere in the decision of this question in which the claims of God and your own eternal wel-

fare are involved? Can you reconcile your conscience to this state of uncertainty and indecision?

Your course is a *dangerous* one. While all your feelings and pursuits are hostile to religion, is it not dangerous for you to remain undecided respecting its truth? Must not your heart become harder, and your sinful habits more inveterate, under the influence of your indecision? God is the being in whose hands your breath is, and if, in the Bible, he has spoken to you, have you not reason to fear that the indifference, the contempt, with which you treat his message, may provoke him to cut you off at a stroke; or to leave you to hardness of heart and blindness of mind, whilst you are thus neglecting to examine and decide this question, which your reason and conscience both declare ought to have been decided by you long ago? Oh! let this matter be settled: "How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, follow him." If the Bible be the word of God, make religion the first great business of your life; let everything else go, until you have secured the great salvation which it reveals; if it be not the word of God, make sure of this matter and be at rest.

II. Let me address myself to those who profess to believe that the Bible is the word of God, and religion essential to their eternal happiness; yet who are so absorbed in the business or pleasures of the world, that they pay little attention to it, and allow it little influence over their temper and conduct. This class is numerous wherever the gospel is preached. They do not question its truth; they speak of the Bible as the word of God; they pay a decent respect to the solemnities of public worship. Their reason, their conscience is on the side of truth, but, alas! their hearts are given to the world. Ask such persons: "Is the Bible true?"—

they do not doubt it—Is religion important?—nothing more so—Do you mean to be a Christian before you die?—God forbid that I should die any other death than that of the righteous. Follow them now into the world, and observe their conduct. It contradicts this their profession at every point. They live as if there was no God, no Heaven, no hell; as if all that is to be gained or lost, to be desired or shunned, to be hoped or feared, was here in this world. Could you examine their hearts, you would find them often alarmed by the warnings of conscience, sometimes startled by the exhibitions of their character and conduct given in the word of God; ever making good resolutions, and ever breaking them; lulling to rest their salutary fears, by saying to serious thoughts, "Go your way for this time; when I have a convenient season I will call for you." The secret of this inconsistency is, that while reason approves a life of piety, and conscience ranges itself on the side of God, their hearts are wedded to the world. Are not such persons acting a part most unreasonable, sinful, and dangerous?

You admit, dear hearer, that the interests of the soul and of eternity infinitely transcend all other interests. Why, then, do you not bend all your energies to the work of providing for them? Why do you not seek *first* the kingdom of God and his righteousness? Do you say, it would interfere with other matters, and at present I have not time for it? Are other matters as important as this? Why was time given you by God? Have you time to grow rich? Have you time to enjoy the pleasures of the world? Have you time to eat and drink and sleep? And yet, no time to serve God; no time to take care of your soul; no time to provide for eternity? Mistaken man, beware! lest God find time for you to die, whilst you are yet unprepared for death.

then must you find time to appear at his bar an unpardoned sinner, and time to bemoan your folly in that world of woe, where is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth.

You believe the Bible to be the word of God; and as taught therein, you believe that you are fallen and depraved, a child of disobedience and an enemy to God by wicked works. And yet, in this condition, you live at ease, and thus practically declare that you are willing to depart from God and be at enmity with him. You believe that if you go into eternity without a new heart, you are for ever undone; and that you are liable to be cut down by death and hurried hence, at any moment; and yet you seek not the regenerating influences of the Spirit. You believe that the soul is of such value, that to provide for its salvation, the Eternal Son of God became a man of sorrows, lived a life of toil and self-denial, and died a death of shame and agony; and yet this salvation, so precious in God's account, when freely offered you, you treat with cold neglect:—And all this, for what? That you may live a little longer in sin—enjoy a few more of those pleasures which do not satisfy you, while they last, and perish in the using—or amass a little more of that wealth, or obtain a little more of that honor, which must all be left at the grave's mouth, if not sooner. Which is most glaring in a course like this? Its folly; its sin; or its danger?

Compare—I should rather say contrast, for there is no comparing things so opposite—contrast your *creed* with your practice; and tremble at your own inconsistency. "I believe in God the Father, Almighty, just and holy:—but I disobey his known commands, despise his threatenings, and brave his displeasure. I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, the only Saviour of lost sinners:—but I account the salvation which he pur-

chased with his blood, not worth my seeking at the cost of present effort and self-denial; I care not for his love, and I cast contempt upon his cross. I believe in the Holy Ghost, who alone regenerates and sanctifies the sinful children of men, and prepares them for Heaven:—but I do not seek his influences, and when he comes unsought, to lead me to repentance, I resist him, and grieve him to depart and leave me to my enjoyment of the world. I believe in a Heaven of perfect and everlasting purity and bliss:—but I live in sin, and thus shut out my immortal soul from every prospect of participation in its joys. I believe in a Hell of endless and insufferable anguish:—but I love the paths that lead down to its dark and desolate abodes; and though God invites, and Jesus beseeches, and the Holy Ghost strives, and Christians pray and labor for my salvation, I hasten to plunge into its flames!!"

How long shall your conviction of truth and your daily practice, your creed and your life, be thus at war one with the other? If the Lord be God, follow him, follow him fully; if Jesus Christ be the Saviour, come to him, rely upon him; if the Holy Ghost be the author of spiritual, eternal life, seek and obey his influences; if you have a soul to be saved or lost, save it—oh! save it, ere it be too late; if there be a Hell, fly, fly, from the wrath to come; and a Heaven, strive, agonize to enter into it.

III. A third class to whom I must address the expostulation of the text, "How long halt ye between two opinions?" embraces those who have felt something of the power of the Gospel, enlightening their minds and impressing their hearts; but who have never yet assumed, or do not now maintain, that firm and decided and consistent character which becomes a follower of Jesus. Many who have not made a public profession of reli-

gion are of this class; and, it is painful to add, not a few of those who have.

If there be one such in this congregation to-day, to him I address myself. You know something of the worth of your soul, and feel something of the importance of holiness as a preparation for a happy life here as well as hereafter; you know that you are a sinner, and need a Saviour, and that Christ, the Saviour of sinners, is able and willing to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him. In so far as you cherish any hope of salvation, it is through his atoning blood and justifying righteousness; and, on the whole, you think that it is your purpose to obey his commandments. But you are not quite willing to forsake all for Christ, and cheerfully deny yourselves and take up the cross and follow him. Perhaps you are immersed in business, and strict obedience to Christ would thwart some of your worldly plans: you could not attend to so large a business, or you could not manage it so profitably as you now do, if you should follow the Lord fully: or you are not quite willing to renounce all the pleasures of the world, or to live in the practice of all known Christian duty. Or you fear the neglect, perhaps the scorn, you might incur from the ungodly, by maintaining on all occasions and in all places, a deportment decidedly Christian. Hence you are wavering and irresolute. To-day, we find you with the Lord's people, entering into their plans, sympathizing in their joys and sorrows, and seeming to esteem them the excellent of the earth; to-morrow, we find you with the men of the world, and apparently, as much at home with the one class as with the other. Were such a thing possible, you would be glad to reconcile the service of God with that of mammon; to have so much religion as is indispensable to carry you to Heaven, yet

not so much as to interfere with any worldly pursuit, not in its very nature sinful.

At times, you seem much engaged in religion. If you have not made a public profession, you seem ready to do it,—if you have made such profession, you seem resolved to live nearer to God and to walk more worthy of your vocation. Again you imbibe the spirit of the world, your devout feelings are all chilled, and you can scarcely be distinguished from those who make no pretensions to religion. To quiet conscience, you have many pleas in self-justification, perhaps true in themselves, but not true as applied by you in your own case. Are you professors of religion; you say, it would injure religion to exhibit it on improper occasions; we must not be too rigid and too severe upon the maxims and practices of the world, lest gay and thoughtless people be disgusted, and religion suffer in their esteem; it is best to be accommodating, as far as we can consistently with our obligations to Christ. All true enough in itself. Yet not true, in the sense which you put upon these declarations, when you urge them to excuse your sinful levity, your love of pleasure, your neglect of self-denial; or to justify your un-Christian conformity to the world. Are you professors of religion; you excuse your acknowledged disobedience to the Saviour's dying command, by pleading the danger there is in making a false profession; and your fear, lest if you should profess, you might afterwards bring reproach upon the cause of Christ. Weighty considerations, certainly:—And yet, all this time, the true cause of your reluctance, though you may be self-deceived and unconscious of it, is the want of a decided, honest, and resolute purpose, to take up the cross and follow Christ.

Faithfulness to Christ, my master, and faithfulness to your souls, my dear hearers, require me to remind you,

that in so far as you shrink from a fearless and open avowal of your love to Christ on every proper occasion; just so far, are you guilty of being ashamed of him; and he hath said, "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of the Father, with the holy angels." And again—"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in Heaven."

Are all your hopes of salvation built on Christ alone? —How unreasonable, then, how sinful, how dangerous for you to neglect what he commands! Can you answer to him for your disobedience to but one of his precepts? Remember that amiable young man, of whom we read in the gospels, who lacked *but one* thing. Hath not God said, "The friendship of the world is enmity against God;" and are you willing to retain its friendship at such a price? Hath he not said, "They that will be rich, fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition?" And are you willing to make a fortune at such a risk? Hath he not said, "No man can serve two masters; ye cannot serve God and mammon?" Beware how you attempt it, lest you find to your cost, that his words are true. Beware, lest while you hesitate and temporize, death overtake you; a great ransom will not then deliver you.

But let me appeal to nobler principles than these. Consider his grace, "who though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich:" and then say, ought any consideration to deter you from honoring him by a holy *life* and conversation? Think what reproach and con-

tradiction of sinners he endured for you; and say, is it not most unreasonable, most ungrateful, to shrink from honoring him through fear of man? Oh, meditate on all his suffering; on his dying love; on all the glory he has purchased for them that trust in him; and say, if your most entire and cheerful consecration of yourselves to him, does not fall infinitely below his claims upon you? Hesitate no longer. "If the Lord be God, follow him;" follow him resolutely, faithfully, constantly, with your whole heart. So shall you secure his blessing here, and your end shall be peace, your immortality eternal life.

He who would be successful in any pursuit, must be decided in his course; pre-eminently is this true in the great business of religion. The obstacles to a faithful following of Christ, are formidable: a deceitful heart, —appetites and passions that clamor for indulgence,— an alluring and ensnaring world,—a spiritual adversary, powerful, crafty, vigilant, cruel. Would you reach the heavenly city? you must set your faces thitherward as a flint. Would you win the heavenly prize? there is a battle to be fought ere it can be yours. Time spent in indecision is lost. While you hesitate, the tide of life is ebbing fast away; death approaches; eternity draws nigh; the judge is even now at the door. The condition of all the dead is fixed for ever. Worlds cannot buy back one moment lost; the mightiest angel cannot blot its record from the book out of which all must be judged. Oh! then, let us be up and doing,— let us work while the day lasts, striving, agonizing to enter in at the strait gate, remembering that the night cometh in which no man can work.

SERMON XIII.

THE HAPPY DECISION.

[Preached on resigning the pastoral charge of the First Presbyterian Church, Richmond, Virginia.]

"And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods whom your fathers served who were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."—JOSHUA xxiv. 15.

THUS a venerable servant of God addressed a people whom he loved, and who had long looked up to him as their guide and leader. God had made Joshua his honored instrument in subduing the enemies of Israel, and putting them into the peaceful possession of the land of promise. He was now a very aged man; but his love to the people of his charge glowed with all its youthful fervor. Anticipating an early summons to enter his heavenly rest, he called the people together, and in the most plain, affectionate, and impressive manner, gave them his last counsel, admonition, and exhortation. He reminded them of all that God had done for them; he briefly set forth the nature and extent of God's claims to their love and obedience; and he laid before them the inevitable consequences of their regarding those claims or disregarding them. In the text, he draws the whole subject to a point; he calls upon them to choose intelligently, deliberately, and finally, whether they will serve God or not. And he avows his own fixed determination, whatever they might do: as for him and his house, they would serve the Lord.

The result of this affectionate and solemn appeal seems to have been very happy. The true servants of God were confirmed and established in their purpose of living to his glory; many who had been hesitating were brought to a full and immediate decision; many who had departed from God and lived in sin had their attention arrested, and turned to the Lord with purpose of heart. All were left without excuse or apology for their neglect of God, and the ruin of their souls. No doubt all who were present that day remember it now, and will remember it with ever increasing emotions of thankfulness and joy, or remorse and anguish, for ever.

My dear hearers: I come to you to-day with this appeal of God's aged servant to his ancient people. For these ten years, it has been my duty and privilege to labor among you in the work of my Master; preaching Christ, and him crucified, as the only and the all-sufficient Saviour of lost sinners; teaching every man, and warning every man, in all wisdom, that I might present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. How diligently and faithfully I have labored, is not for me to say. I feel humbled, before God, that I have done so little. But the eye of my Master has been upon me, and there is a record, full and unerring, of all my labors among you, and the spirit and manner of their performance; and a day is coming when all shall be manifest.

This morning I come to you, my impenitent hearers, to close up my stated ministry among you, and to beseech you once more to be reconciled to God. I know not how I can address you in terms more appropriate to such an occasion, than those of my text: "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve."

No doubt the All-wise Creator and Sovereign of the universe has a plan and a purpose concerning the work of his hands. This plan and purpose must comprehend

all worlds, embrace all beings, and reach from eternity. The Lord hath prepared his throne in the Heavens, and his kingdom ruleth over all. The infinite perfections of God secure this plan and purpose against the possibility of ultimate failure. All his boundless resources are pledged to execute his wise and holy plan; in that plan his wisdom has assigned to us a place suited to our nature. We are his creatures, and we cannot escape from his control, or shake off our dependence on him. But he has made us free agents, and placed us in circumstances to give full scope and employment to our free agency. Some things that relate to his glory in us, and to our present and future happiness, God has fixed beyond our control: we cannot change them; he has set us bounds we cannot pass. In other matters, he has left us to use our freedom; he has given us power to discover wherein lie our duty and happiness, and to act as we please; he sets before us life and death, a blessing and a curse, and bids us choose for ourselves.

Let us call your attention to some things that are not left to your choice, and to some things that are, and then persuade you in these last to choose aright to-day.

God has not left it to your choice whether you would exist or not. A few years ago you were not; your soul had no existence; your body was unorganized dust; God chose to call you into being; he formed your body of the dust; he breathed into you the breath of life; and here you are in his house, to-day, the workmanship of his hand. You cannot retire into your original nothing; the being he has given, you cannot lay aside.

Nor has he left it to you to choose in what form you would exist. He might have made you a stock, or a stone, or a brute, or a mere thinking machine, incapable of free agency, of obligation, of responsibility. But he has made you a man, an agent, intelligent and free.

You have capacities to know him, to love him, to submit to his authority, to co-operate willingly with him in the wise and holy purposes of his government. Thus you are a subject of moral government; you are under obligation to decide and to act aright towards God and your fellow creatures; you are responsible to God who made you for the employment of your powers of voluntary action. It is not left to your choice whether you will be a free agent, bound to obey God, and accountable to him for your actions and your motives. These points are fixed; you may wish it were not so, but the wish is vain. You are free, under obligation, responsible to God; you cannot help it. But whether existence shall be a blessing or a curse; whether as a free agent you will obey God or rebel; whether you will acknowledge your obligations to God, or trample upon them; whether your accountableness will raise you to Heaven, or sink you to hell, is for you to decide. Choose ye this day.

It is not for you to choose whether God shall give you a law, and require you to obey; whether his all-seeing eye shall mark all your actions, words, and motives; or whether you will give account of yourself to him or not. These points are already settled. He *has* placed you under his law, which is holy, and just, and good, and to that law he has annexed eternal life as the reward of obedience, and eternal death as the penalty of transgression.

He *is*, and ever has been, about your path, and about your bed, and spieth out all your ways. No darkness, nor shadow of death, can hide from his eye, nor conceal from him one thought or feeling; and he will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or evil. And with unerring truth and righteousness he will render to you according to

your works. As to these points you have no choice. God has spoken, and who shall disannul it. For ever, O Lord! thy word is settled in heaven.

But whether you will obey his law and live, or disobey and die; whether in his presence, and under his eye, you will be wise and gain his favor, or play the fool and provoke his wrath; whether you will stand before his bar, and meet his irrevocable sentence as his friend or his enemy, you are to decide. Choose ye this day.

It is not for you to say whether your short, uncertain life in this world shall be to you a term of moral probation; whether you are now upon trial for Heaven, forming a character in which to appear before God, and filling up a course of conduct according to which you must be happy or miserable for ever. This point is fixed. The righteous Lord trieth the hearts of the sons of men. He *has* put you upon your probation, holds you there, and you cannot help it. Every day you are going forward to death and the judgment; and every day the work of preparation for your eternal destiny is going on; every day, by every dispensation of God, every event and relation in life, every changing scene through which you pass, every action, word, and thought, you are forming a character; you are filling up a measure; you are making up an account for or against you in the book of God. You are preparing for that last solemn interview with him, and ripening for your final sentence and your eternal doom.

But whether your character be sinful or holy; whether, day by day, you lay up treasure in Heaven, or treasure up wrath against the day of wrath; whether, by patient continuance in well doing you seek for glory and eternal life, or being contentious and not obeying *the truth*, but obeying unrighteousness, you meet indig-

nation and wrath, is for you to say. Choose ye therefore this day.

It is not for you who hear me to say, whether you will be sinners against God—transgressors of his holy laws, and exposed to his righteous penalty—aliens from the love of God, unfit for his holy presence and service, enemies in your minds by wicked works. No, my hearers; you have already sinned and are under condemnation; already the love of God is not in you, but the carnal mind which is enmity against God. You cannot recall the past. What you have done, you cannot undo. Go where you will, do what you will, you are guilty and polluted; and if your guilt is not pardoned and your pollution cleansed while God is holy, you must be an outcast from his presence; while he is just, you must meet his frown: nor is it for you to say whether, as sinners, you shall be put under a dispensation of mercy, and called to seek salvation from sin and death by repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. In this matter God has already acted without consulting you. He hath so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son. It is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. He hath borne our sins in his own body. He hath received of the Father the promise of the Spirit, that we might be created anew. Having finished the work, having risen from the dead, and received all power in heaven and earth, He hath commanded his servants "Go preach repentance and the remission of sins." His message of mercy has come to you; unto you is preached in his name, the forgiveness of sins; and, by him, all that believe are justified. To-day the call and the offer of God are to you, Repent ye and be converted, and your sins shall be blotted out. Nor is it for you to say, whether the love of God

in the gift of his Son to save sinners; and the compassion of Christ in laying down his life for his enemies; and the full and free provisions of the Gospel; and all its gracious calls and offers to you, shall stamp an impression on your character, whether they shall enter into your account at the judgment, and whether they shall tell upon your eternal destiny. No, my dear hearers, this matter is settled; the Gospel we preach is unto God a sweet savor of Christ in *all* who hear it; in them that are saved and in them that *perish*; a savor of life unto life, or of death unto death. You are already sinners, sinners under a dispensation of mercy; as such you are now forming your characters, going forward to the judgment, ripening for the joys or sorrows of eternity. You cannot help it. You may deny it—or complain of it,—that will not alter it. In these things you have no choice. Whatever you believe, or desire, or do, all is fixed. "For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in Heaven."

But whether you will confess and forsake your sins and find mercy, or curse them and die; whether you will follow after holiness, and be made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, or live on in sin, and have your part with the fearful and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and the unchaste, and all liars, in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone which is the second death; whether you will obey the call of God, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and yield yourself up to his service with a willing mind and an obedient heart, that you may have everlasting life; or put away from you the offers of mercy, count yourself unworthy of eternal life, and, while others are saved, behold and despise, and wonder and perish: this is for you to decide. Choose ye, *therefore*, this day whom ye will serve.

The question is not, my dear hearers, whether you will *ever* give up the world; but whether you will forsake it *now*, and choose a better, the good part, or hold it fast till your soul is ruined, and it is torn from your reluctant grasp by unrelenting death, is for you to choose. It is not whether you will ever be concerned about your soul and convinced of sin, but whether you will now attend to the things that belong to your peace, and mourn over your sins with a godly sorrow—or put off these things, till the pains of hell take hold upon you, and you weep and wail among the damned.

It is not whether you will ever believe the testimony of God concerning Jesus Christ, and salvation through his blood. That testimony is true, and a day is coming, when no sinner in the universe will doubt it. But whether you will now, with the heart believe unto righteousness and set to your seal that God is true, or for a few days make God a liar, till you pass into eternity, and truth pours upon your disembodied spirit, in a blaze of demonstration, that will wither and blast you for ever. It is not whether you will ever submit to Jesus Christ—for at the name of Jesus *every knee shall bow and every tongue confess*—but whether you must now touch the golden sceptre of his mercy, and bow to him upon a throne of grace or harden your hearts against him, till he dash you in pieces and there be none to deliver. My dear hearers, God is not a man that he should lie. Hath he said it and will he not do it, or hath he spoken and shall he not make it good! He is of one mind, and who can turn him? he is a rock; his way is perfect. It is for you to choose whether you will humbly submit to his authority, and penitently seek his mercy, and cheerfully engage in his service, and devote yourself to the promotion of his cause, and have God upon your side, and all his immu-

table perfections pledged for your salvation, and rejoice in him as your rock—the strength of your heart and your portion for ever.

Or whether you will set up your will, in opposition to his, seek your own gratification, in despite of his authority and his mercy, persevere in a course he has forbidden and upon which he frowns, and thus compel him to dash you in pieces, and cast you into hell.

My dear fellow sinners, can you hesitate, whether you will serve God, or not! Is there any room for indecision? any pretexts for delay? can you harden yourself against him and prosper? What shall it profit you if you gain the whole world and lose your soul? Oh, fear him who hath power to cast both soul and body in hell. Come, taste, and see the Lord is gracious.

The case is so plain, one would think it impossible a rational being should hesitate a moment, yet you have hesitated. You are venturing upon the unequal contest; your purpose is ultimately to submit, to be upon the Lord's side. But you delay; day after day you linger in the open field of sin and rebellion; thus your habits of impenitence become fixed, your hearts grow hard, the obstacles to your salvation multiply and rise like walls of adamant, till death arrest you when you think not of it, and you are hurried away, unpardoned, unsanctified, unprepared, to your last interview with God and your eternal doom.

Joshua had witnessed the fatal consequences of delay in those who hardened their hearts in the wilderness, and were cut off in sin; hence he says, "*This day* choose." And are delays less dangerous now! How often, within the last ten years, have I seen the fatal consequences of procrastination in this city. How many of your own acquaintances have fallen victims to *their* own folly and presumption. Oh! be wise—ac-

quaint *now* yourself with God. Now, kiss the Son lest he be angry. Choose ye this day whom ye will serve. Young men, children of the Church and the Sabbath School—ye with whom God's Spirit has long striven—be wise; choose ye this day.

Soon I shall meet you before the judgment seat of Christ. Shall I see you there on the right hand, among those who have washed their robes white in the blood of the Lamb? or shall I behold you far away on the left hand, among the despisers of mercy, and witness your despair, and hear your bitter cries and your unavailing prayers. Choose ye this day whom ye will serve.

SERMON XIV.

THE CHILDREN OF BELIEVERS—MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH.*

"But Jesus said, suffer little children, and forbid them not to come unto me, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven."—MATTHEW XIX. 14.

YOU probably recollect on what occasion these words were spoken. It was now near the close of the Saviour's ministry; and the surprising power, wisdom, and goodness he had displayed on so many occasions had brought his character into general notice. This circumstance, while it exasperated the rulers and teachers whom he boldly reproved, and who were determined at all events to reject his claims, had raised the expectations of the common people, and wrought in their minds a conviction that he was either the Messiah whose advent had been so often predicted, or, at least, a prophet of Jehovah, mighty in word and deed, whose favor would secure important benefit. Under this impression, parents brought to him their infant children, with a request that he would lay his hands on them and pray for them,

* As a pastor Dr. A. gave much time to the instruction of the young. His spiritual children will ever remember his faithful Bible class instructions, his personal appeals, and fervent prayers. His ministry in Richmond was blessed by large accessions of youth to his church. Some of them are still faithful laborers in the vineyard. Others are with him rejoicing in the fulness of redeeming love. Mrs. Dr. Wilson of the South African Mission to the Zulus, was a subject of converting grace during a revival. At thirteen years of age she joyfully devoted herself to the service of Christ, and at twenty, said with her dying breath, "I do not regret that I have come to this dark land."

or bless them as Jacob had blessed the two sons of Joseph, and as those who were eminent for their wisdom and piety frequently offered their prayers, for such as were younger than themselves. The disciples when they heard this application to their Master, discouraged it, and found fault with those who made it, either thinking it would be troublesome to one who was so constantly occupied in teaching the people and healing their diseases, or regarding such attention to infants as unsuitable to the dignity of his character, and the importance of his work. With their ill-timed interference, their Master was much displeased, and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of Heaven. And he laid his hands on them, and blessing them, departed thence. It is worthy of remark here, that these were *infant* children, for such is the primary and appropriate meaning of the word used by the Evangelists in relating the event. We are told by Mark, that the Saviour took them *up in his arms.* There is no reason to suppose that they were diseased, and brought to him to be healed, for no mention is made of this, and if it had been so, the disciples would not have forbidden the parents to bring them to their Master, nor would he have given as his reason for receiving them, that of such was the kingdom of Heaven, any more than he did when he healed others. It is specially *to this reason* which our Lord assigned for his conduct on this occasion that I wish to direct your attention. It is as if he had said, you do wrong to forbid their parents to bring their infant offspring to me; I approve of their conduct; I will grant their request; for such belong to that spiritual kingdom which I came to establish.

If this view of the text be correct, then it teaches this general truth, *that the infant children of members of*

the church of Christ are also members of the church. I shall undertake to sustain this position, and to derive from it a number of inferences. The public and solemn recognition of the membership of children, which you have just witnessed, renders this an appropriate subject of our meditations at this time, and I fear that neither the subject itself is as well understood among us as it should be; nor do the duties which grow out of it receive that diligent attention which they deserve. For these reasons I request your attention to it, disclaiming all intention of attacking the principles or wounding the feelings of our brethren, whose views of this subject differ from our order.

In confirmation of the assertion that the infant children of church members are also members of the church, I remark, it is not denied that they were infant children, nor that their parents who brought them to Christ were members of the Jewish church, nor that that church was, until the establishment of Christianity, the church of God. What then does our Saviour mean, when he says of these infant children of church members, that of such are the kingdom of Heaven? The answer to this question depends upon the meaning of the phrase, the kingdom of Heaven. Now, this phrase, in the New Testament, always signifies either the work of divine grace on the hearts of believers, or else the visible church of our Lord Jesus Christ. This last is by far the most common meaning of the phrase. In this sense, it sometimes comprehends the church triumphant in Heaven, as well as the church militant on earth. Most commonly, it is confined to the visible church of Christ on earth, and alludes to the prophecy of Daniel concerning the times of the Messiah, "In those days shall the God of Heaven set up a kingdom." This is its meaning in all those texts, when it is said the king-

dom of Heaven is at hand, and where the kingdom of Heaven is compared to a net cast into the sea; to a field where wheat and tares grow together until the harvest; to a grain of mustard seed, small at first, but growing into a great plant; to leaven hid in three measures of meal. Such must be its meaning here. For it cannot mean a work of grace in the heart, otherwise these children, and all such, are regenerate; and if it means that the church in Heaven is composed of such, then much more do they belong to the church. Nor can it be properly objected to this, that our Lord meant to teach, not that such little children, as were brought to him, were members of his church, but that adults of a childlike temper and spirit were. Both the connexion and the language are unfavorable to this interpretation. It is, indeed, said, in the preceding chapter, except ye be converted and become *as* little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven; but there, the word used to express this similarity is altogether different from that which is here employed. Our text, then, fairly interpreted, teaches that these little children, and all *like them*, are members of the visible church. The same truth is taught, if I do not mistake, in other portions of the word of God. The first epistle to the Corinthians was written, partly in answer to several questions proposed by that church to the apostle for his decision. One of these grew out of the peculiar state of things at the first promulgation of the Gospel. Among the early conversions to the faith it often happened that the Gospel was believed in by a woman and rejected by her husband, or received by a man and rejected by his wife. Under the old dispensation, such church members as were married to idolatrous partners, were required to separate from them. A question arose as to the duty of the believing partners; in the case stated above, ought

such an one to live with an unbeliever? This question the apostle answers in the affirmative, and adds, For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband, else were your children unclean, but now are they holy. What does he mean when he says, your children are holy? Only two meanings are ever attached to this word in the Scriptures. The one is moral, the other ceremonial.

Persons are said to be holy in the first sense, when their hearts are renewed and purified by the Spirit of God. They are said to be holy ceremonially, when they belong to the visible church, and have a right to partake in its ordinances, and are externally and professedly devoted to God. In this sense the Jews, and all proselytes to their religion, are frequently called *a holy people* in the Old Testament, and all who belong to the visible church, whether regenerated by the Spirit of God or not, are styled *holy* by the apostle Paul, when comparing the visible church to an olive tree, he says: "If the root be holy, so are the branches." Now it is not pretended by any, that all children born of believing parents are holy; yet the apostle says, "if only one of the parents is a believer, the children are holy." This must therefore mean that they are ceremonially holy; that they stand in a covenant relation to God, and are fit persons to be admitted to his ordinances. The only objection to this interpretation is, that according to the same reasoning the unbelieving parent is also made a member of the church by the believing partner. For the apostle asserts that the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, as well as that the children are holy. If, therefore, you admit the child to gospel ordinances because it is holy, as the child of a believing parent, you ought, for the same reason, to admit the

unbelieving partner, who is sanctified by the believer. But this you refuse to do; therefore, as the argument does not prove the membership of the unbelieving parent, it cannot prove that of the child. In answer to this objection, I remark, it takes for granted that the sanctification of the husband by the wife, is precisely of the same extent, and produces the same effects, as the holiness inherited by the children from a believing parent. This cannot be admitted; because God never founded the privilege of admission to his church upon the mere fact of intermarriage with his people, but he did expressly found a right to that privilege upon the fact of being born of them, as was distinctly declared when the church was first formed in the family of Abraham, and constantly acted upon from that time. Again, by a positive statute, adults are not to be admitted to the church without a profession of faith. Consequently, Paul's doctrine here must be restricted by that special and express command. But with respect to infants no such restriction exists. The unbelieving husband is sanctified to a certain extent by his believing wife, for so the apostle asserts, but not to such an extent as to render him a member of the church, for that is expressly forbidden by the command already quoted. The membership of infants does not contravene this command. Therefore the holiness, which is here ascribed to infants, does involve their membership, though that which is ascribed to the unbelieving parent does not involve his.

To this conclusion the very words of the text lead us. The sanctification of the unbelieving parent here spoken of, evidently regards him, not for his own sake, but on account of his believing partner, and so far as the covenant privileges of the children are concerned. It was admitted that if both parents were believers, their child-

ren were holy. If both were unbelievers, their children were ceremonially unclean. But what was the situation of the children when one parent was a believer, and the other an unbeliever? Were they to be esteemed holy on account of the believing parent, or unholy on account of the unbelieving one? This question the apostle decides by saying, that for the purpose of conveying to their infants the privilege of being within the visible church, the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife by the husband. That instead of the interest which the child has in the covenant by the faith of one parent being made void by the unbelief of the other, the very fact of being married to a believer shall so far control the effect of unbelief, shall so far consecrate the infidel party, that their children shall be members of the church. Now, saith he, they are *holy*. Here, then, is a confirmation of the doctrine deduced from the text.

I will only detain you, to offer in further confirmation of this truth, the original constitution of the church in the family of Abraham, and the testimony of the Scriptures that this church is substantially the same in every age. In the seventeenth chapter of Genesis, we have recorded the covenant made with Abraham, *as the Father of the faithful*, by which the visible church was formed in his family. This we are carefully to distinguish from the promises made to Abraham as an individual, that he should be saved; that the Saviour should descend from him, and that the land of Canaan should be given to his posterity. These were distinct promises, made many years before. In the same manner we must not confound this with a transaction so entirely distinct from it, as the national covenant made with the children of Israel at the giving of the ceremonial law, four hundred years later.

By examining this original charter of the Church of God, we find that infants were expressly included in it as members, and that their membership was by divine command *recognised*, and that in precisely the same manner as that of adults. Now, the Scriptures teach us that the very same church which was then formed, exists at this day, and shall continue to the end of the world. To quote only one passage out of many, let us hear the apostle Paul, speaking of the rejection of the Jews from the church on account of unbelief, of the introduction of the Gentiles in their stead, and of their future restoration. Romans xi. 17–24, he tells the Gentiles they were by nature "a wild olive tree," but that the Jews were "the good olive tree." From this good olive tree the Jews were broken off, and into it the Gentiles were grafted as scions into a stock not their own. This cannot refer to their natural state as sinners before God, for in this there was no difference; nor can it refer to their state as sinners saved by grace, for from such a state, men are not broken off, nor was this the condition of the Jews as a people. It must then refer to their state as a church, to their public relation to God, and *their privileges* as professedly his people. The Jews were not broken off from the rites, ceremonies, and sacrifices of the Mosaic law, nor were the Gentiles introduced into them, for these were already abolished, when the apostle wrote. The olive tree, then, from which the Jews were broken, and into which the Gentiles were grafted, must mean the visible church, and the privileges of the covenant made with Abraham, who is so often called the father of believing Gentiles, as well as Jews. Now, mark the apostle's language. The olive tree is not cut up by the roots or destroyed, and a new one planted, but some of its branches are broken off, and in their place others

are inserted, not into another tree but into the very same. The New Testament church is the very same to which the Jews belonged. The Jews are cast out of it for their unbelief. The Gentiles occupy their place, and succeed to all their privileges. One of these, a principal one, was the membership of their infants. This privilege has never been revoked. Therefore the children of Gentile believers are members of the church of God. Again, the apostle speaks thus of the future restoration of the Jews: "If they abide not in unbelief, they shall be grafted in again." Now, if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted into the good olive, how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree. They shall be grafted in *again;* grafted into what? Into their *own olive tree.* Then their *own* tree must be preserved. But when they come in, the Gentiles will not be broken off. Both will flourish together; will belong to the same church; will be branches of the same olive tree, and thus will be the same from which the Jews were once broken off. Their own olive tree, saith the apostle. Could any language express more strongly the truth, that the church, though its members are changed and its privileges enlarged, is in every age the same church. But the Jews before their rejection were *with their children* members of the church. Therefore, when they are reinstated, or grafted in again, their children also must be members of the church. Otherwise the promise fails. But when they are thus reinstated, they will come into the church with the Gentiles. They will share in the same privileges which we now possess. The same truth is taught by all those texts, and they are numerous, which speak of Gentile believers as the childen of Abraham, as inheriting the promises made to him, and as confirming,

by the privileges and blessings they enjoy, the faithfulness of that covenant, "Thou shalt be a Father of many nations, and I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee, a covenant made sure," saith the apostle, *to that seed*, which is of the faith of Abraham who is the Father of *us all*. In a word, the doctrine of the text is confirmed by all those passages which teach us that the church of God in all ages, and under all the changes of form through which it passes, brings to those who belong to it the same privileges and blessings with a distinctness and a fulness constantly increasing. If it is the same church substantially, i.e., if it rests on the same promises, has the same head, and secures the same eternal blessings to its living members; then, however important the changes which may have taken place, those changes are all expressly mentioned, and whatever has not been thus altered remains as before. If any contend that the membership of infants was taken away, they are bound to point us to a "Thus saith the Lord," to support the assertion.

But if the children of believers are members of the church of Christ, then important consequences follow from this truth. The first inference which I shall notice is this: if they are church members, then they ought to be recognised as such, by that rite which is the appointed external mark of membership. Thus they were always recognised, by Divine command, from the days of Abraham to the coming of Christ. At that time, a change was made in the manner of dispensing the same blessing, of the same covenant, and a corresponding change was made, in the external seal of the covenant. Baptism came into the place of circumcision. This is not mere assertion. It is evidently thus of

adults. Both put a mark upon their subjects as belonging to that society which God hath set apart for himself. Both signify and seal justification by faith, even the pardon of sin, the righteousness of Christ. Both represent and are means of renovation and purity of heart, by the spirit of Christ. The only difference between them, as seals of the covenant, relates to that more enlarged and spiritual dispensation of the blessings of the covenant, under which baptism is its seal. This the apostle explains when speaking of being baptized into Christ. He says: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither *male nor female*, there is neither bond nor free." Thus positively annulling, in spiritual things, all distinction arising from difference of nation, sex, or condition. And this substitution of baptism, in the place of circumcision, which may be so strongly argued from their similarity of meaning and use, is further confirmed by the fact that baptism holds precisely the same relation to circumcision which the Lord's supper holds to sacrifice, especially the passover. Children are then to be baptized, for the very same reason that they were circumcised before the coming of Christ: because they are members of the church, and this is the prescribed mark by which their membership is to be recognised.

A second inference from the truths established is: if children of believing parents are members of the church, then it is the duty of the Church to watch over them, to instruct them, and, in a word, to extend to them a discipline suited to their condition and their age. This must be done, in a great measure, indirectly, and through their parents, from whom their membership is derived, and by whom they are presented to receive the seal of that membership. Important and responsible, indeed, are their duties in this respect. To a faithful perform-

ance of these duties, they pledge themselves, in the most solemn manner, when they present their children for baptism. If they are faithful, they have every encouragement to expect a blessing. The promises are to them and to their children. If they neglect their duty, if they do not train up their children, who are thus consecrated to God, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, fearful will be their account! In this arduous work they are entitled to all the assistance and encouragement which the church can give; especially they are entitled to its prayers, and to the aid and co-operation of its pastors and elders. If this subject were felt as it should be in our churches—if Christian parents, church members, and church officers, would arise to the diligent, faithful, and prayerful discharge of their duty towards those who have in infancy been consecrated to God, by having the seal of his covenant put upon them, —we should see the blessed effects of this Divine ordinance in the saving conversion of multitudes, who are now left to grow up lamentably ignorant of Him in whose holy name they have been baptized. Yes, Christian parents, you are under the most sacred obligations to train up for God those who have, by their relation to you, been born within the pale of the visible church, and for whom you have claimed a recognition as members of the church. Great is your encouragement to labor and pray for their salvation. The promise is to you and to your children; plead on their behalf with your covenant-keeping God. Be mindful of those solemn vows which you have taken upon you when you presented them for baptism. Those vows are registered in Heaven, and to be remembered at the bar of God. If your Heavenly Father sees fit to remove your dear children in infancy, recollect that you gave them to him, and he does but take what you con-

secrated to him. If he removes *you* from them, leave them in his hands. Are they not his? Will he not take care of his own? If he spares them to you, and you to them, always look upon them as devoted to him. Teach them their obligations and their mercies; let them see that their salvation is the most ardent desire of your hearts. Oh! if they should perish at last, how fearful must be their doom. If they perish through your unfaithfulness, how will you answer when God inquires for those lambs he committed to your care! How will you meet them at his bar! Make it your daily prayer, your daily effort, to persuade them joyfully to ratify, by their own act, what you did for them ere they were capable of acting for themselves. Christ invites you to bring them to him. Watch over them; instruct them; and may you at last be able to say with joy to your Father and theirs, "Here are we and those whom thou hast given us."

A third inference from the subject we have considered is this: the children of members of the church who have been dedicated to God in infancy, are under peculiar obligations to *devote themselves* to his service; as such are connected with the church only through their parents, when they come to act for themselves their membership must be confirmed by their own voluntary dedication of themselves to God, or it ceases, of course, and they wilfully go out from the company of the people of God, and forfeit the privileges of their birthright. How fearful is this! It is not simple rebellion against God, like the sin of those who were never within his church. It is the rupture of the most sacred ties; it is apostasy; it is like the sin of Esau, who sold his birthright for a morsel. Let not such plead, these are not obligations of our own choosing, therefore we are not bound by them. True, you did not choose them

for yourselves; God in his mercy chose them for you, before you knew good from evil. But are they for that reason less binding? You did not choose to be born in a Christian land, to be the children of pious parents, to be instructed and prayed for in your childhood. God chose thus for you also. But do they not lay you under the most sacred obligations? Will he not call you to account for your improvement of them? You cannot alter any of these things. They are all mercies —rich mercies. If improved aright, they will lead to immortal blessings. So is your membership in the church as the children of God's people. Come then, ratify it by your own act; give your hearts to God, to your God, to your fathers' God. Oh! how far have ye already departed from him. But hark! he addresses you: "Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backsliding; I will receive you graciously; I will love you freely." Come, confess your Saviour before men, and he will confess you before the angels of God. He is gracious and compassionate; his yoke is easy and his burden light. Oh! do not renounce your allegiance to the Lord; do not disown the Prince of Peace; do not disclaim your fathers' God; do not forswear your consecration to his service; do not abjure those solemn vows which were made for you, and over you, when you were presented to him in the sanctuary, when his blessed name was called upon you, and you were sprinkled with the symbol of that blood which cleanseth from all sin. You cannot sin as others do; your neglect of Christ is not simple unbelief—it is *apostasy* from him. Every hour you continue in it, is an hour of contempt for his dying love, for his great salvation. How will your hearts endure, or your hands be strong, when he shall reckon with you for not owning him, for counting the blood of his covenant an unholy thing.

He will reckon with you; you are his by sacred ties; you cannot shake off your obligations, or blot out those solemn vows which are registered in Heaven. No: you may destroy yourselves for ever; but you cannot shake off your obligations. Oh! come, then, receive the Lord Christ in truth, take your place at his table, and walk in the way of his commandments.

SERMON XV.

TO DIE IS GAIN.

"For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain."—PHILIPPIANS i. 21.

THIS brief sentence presents at once the character and the reward of the genuine disciple of Jesus. It is an epitome of the believer's arduous journey, and of its triumphant termination. Paul, once a persecutor, now an apostle of Jesus Christ, and a prisoner in bonds for the love he bore to him, speaks here from his own experience. Life and death, time and eternity, earth and heaven, pass before us as they were present to his mind while he wrote, and under the aspect they habitually assumed while he contemplated them. The language he here uses concerning himself he applies substantially to all believers, in his letter to the Romans. "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's." This is our warrant for saying that though in the text he speaks of himself, yet he does not describe anything peculiar to himself, but draws the outline of Christian experience, as it is common to all genuine believers. As, therefore, the text presents the character and hope of the true disciple of Christ, it contains a topic, whose discussion can scarcely be unseasonable at any time, and one peculiarly appropriate to an occasion like the present, designed especially to lead our minds to a suitable recollection and improvement of the recent removal

from among us of one who had long held a place among the professed followers of Jesus, and whose life, in its progress, and at its close, bore testimony to the sincerity of her profession.

"To me to live is Christ." The expression is brief and idiomatical, and though somewhat obscure, is lively and full of energy. It reminds one of the language of the same writer, on other occasions. "Now I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God." Again, "Your life is hid with Christ in God." "When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." So Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." As the living Father sent me and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me, even he shall believe by me. To the believer, to live is Christ, because Christ is the author, and the supporter of spiritual and everlasting life in his soul. By nature all men are dead in trespasses and sins. They are dead, because under the condemning sentence of that law which declares, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die;" and because they are destitute of all true holiness, of all genuine love to the character, the government, the service, and the worship of God, of all relish for communion with him, and for the holy joys of his immediate presence. This is the testimony of the Bible concerning every man; and every genuine disciple of Christ has been experimentally taught the truth of this testimony, in its application to himself, by the power of the Holy Ghost convincing him of sin, and constraining him to ask with the earnestness of one who feels himself lost, what must I do to be saved? The same Almighty Spirit has guided him to Jesus Christ, who came to seek and to save that

which was lost. In his obedience and sufferings, he sees a perfect atonement for sin, and a way opened for the extension of mercy to sinners, consistently with the holiness and justice of God. In the promise of the Spirit to enlighten, and renew, and purify all that believe, he beholds a provision adequate to restore him to the knowledge, the law, and the likeness of God; to qualify him for his service, and for communion with him here, and for the everlasting joys of his presence beyond the grave. Feeling his own lost condition; persuaded of the truth of the record God hath given us of his Son; cordially approving of the gospel method of salvation, and encouraged by the love of Christ, in dying for sinners, and by the gracious invitations he addresses to them, he renounces every other hope, and casts himself upon the sovereign, unmerited mercy of God in Christ. He is accepted in the beloved, and his acceptance is confirmed to him by the influences of the Spirit shedding abroad the love of God in his heart, and giving him joy and peace in believing. He has redemption through the blood of Christ, even the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace; and being delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son, he is made meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light. By faith he is vitally united to Christ, as the branch is united to the vine, or as the members are united to the body, so that Christ's spirit dwells in him, and he derives wisdom, strength, and consolation from him.

Thus Christ is the author of spiritual life to every believer, as by his righteousness they are freed from condemnation, and justified in the sight of God; and by his Spirit, they are created anew in righteousness and true holiness, and qualified for the love, the worship,

and the enjoyment of God, and that life which flows from Christ as its source into the believer's soul, is sustained and supported by him. He lives a life of faith, on the Son of God. Daily he looks to him, and relies upon him for pardon, holiness, and consolation. Christ, in his person, character, offices, and work, as he is set forth in his word and ordinances, is that spiritual food; that bread of life, by which his soul is fed; his faith invigorated; his penitence and humility deepened; his love increased; his zeal animated and purified; his hope confirmed and brightened; and he is strengthened to labor without fainting, to suffer patiently, to overcome when he is tempted, and to hold fast his profession and his confidence to the end. His spiritual union to the Saviour, and communion with him, is the constant support of that holy love which reigns in his heart, governs his life, and forms and animates his character. As the branch derives its nourishment and support from the vine, so does he from Christ. Without Christ, separated from him, cut off from access to him in his ordinances, and from those supplies of grace which he imparts, he can do nothing. Of himself, he is not sufficient so much as to think a good thought; but, through Christ strengthening him, he can do all things. Christ liveth in him; and the life he now lives in the flesh is by the faith of the Son of God. Thus, to live is Christ to the believer; because his spiritual life flows from Christ as its fountain, and by him it is supported and he is nourished unto everlasting life. The grace and spirit of Christ is, in all his people, a well of living water springing up unto life eternal.

But, secondly, to live is Christ, because Christ is the end and object of the believer's life; as one may say of *the sensualist*, to live is to gratify his appetites and

passions; of a covetous man to live, is to amass wealth; of the votary of ambition to live, is to acquire power and honor; so, of the apostle, to live was to glorify Christ; and of every believer, to live is Christ; because the great end which he has in view, the prize for which he contends, the mark towards which he presses onward, the goal at which he aims is to honor Christ, by knowing him better; becoming more like him, and enjoying more intimate communion with him; and by promoting among his fellow men, that cause for which Christ died, that kingdom over which he reigns, and in whose triumph over every opposing interest he will be glorified and rejoice for ever. The context shows that this is the exact meaning of the expression here. The apostle remarks that, for himself, it would be far better to depart, and be with Christ; and he had a desire to do so. But, if his life were prolonged, he would thus have an opportunity of doing more for the honor of Christ, in preaching that gospel by which saints were edified and comforted, and sinners converted and saved; so that he was at a loss which to prefer, whether to die and be with Christ, which would be unspeakable gain, or to live and labor for the honor of his Saviour, in the salvation of sinners, which was more needful for those to whom he wrote. In this sense, to live is Christ to every believer, and I am acquainted with no better proof that one is born of God, no surer test of the genuineness of penitence and faith, and the stability of hope, than this: to honor Christ, by promoting in himself, and in his fellow creatures, that work of reconciliation to God, of renovation after his image, and restoration to his favor, for which Christ labored and suffered, for which, having assumed our nature, he lived, and died, and rose, and reigns. This is the great object for which

every believer lives; this is habitually before his mind as the one thing needful, the chief end of his existence, the pole-star that guides him over this dark and troubled ocean on which he is borne to the shores of eternity. When he loses sight of this he is alarmed, for he knows himself in danger; he is humbled and sorrowful, for he is conscious of guilt. Here his desires, his hopes, his affections, centre and terminate; hither tends every motion of the Spirit of God upon his soul, every active principle of his renewed nature. For this he longs, he prays, he labors, he suffers, he denies himself, he forgets the things that are behind; and through infirmities, temptation, toil, weariness, sorrows, bereavements, and death itself, he presses towards this mark as the prize of his high calling.

Thus did the apostle; thus did every one of his companions in labors and tribulation, for that kingdom of God of which they were accounted worthy; thus did that great company of martyrs who counted not their lives dear, that they might finish their course with joy; thus did that great cloud of witnesses, who, having overcome by the blood of the Lamb, have gone to receive the end of their faith, the salvation of their souls; thus do all who are partakers of their faith, and imbued with their spirit, and shall at last share their reward. The glory of Christ in his own salvation, and in that of his fellow sinners, is the object which every believer pursues. In this pursuit love to Christ is his animating motive, the law of Christ is his rule, the grace of Christ is his fountain of wisdom and strength, and conformity to the example of Christ, and communion with him in his ordinances, are the means. To this object he feels himself bound by every motive that can exert an influence upon him as an intelligent, accountable, and immortal being. He sees in it a perfect excellence and

beauty that command his highest esteem and approbation, and he learns from the volume of revelation that all holy beings view it with like emotions; yea, that the blessed God himself regards it with perfect complacency as the grand object of his moral government, for whose attainment he has put forth all those manifestations of his power, wisdom, holiness, truth, and love, which shine in the plan of salvation, fill Heaven with admiration and joy, and will be the theme of everlasting songs. He regards this as the end for which he has been created, preserved, redeemed, regenerated, sanctified, adopted into the family of God, sealed to the day of redemption, and crowned with countless blessings, temporal and spiritual; and every conviction of duty, every feeling of gratitude, every tie that binds his allegiance to the throne of a sin-pardoning God, bind him to seek the honor of Christ as the great end of life. He beholds the present happiness and the eternal well-being of himself and of all his fellow men inseparably connected with the honor of Christ, in the accomplishment of those holy purposes for which he died. He sees the everlasting interests of his own immortal soul, and of the immortal souls of his fellow men, bound up in this object, identified with it; and it is as dear to him as his own happiness and that of his fellow travellers to eternity. Thus it is, my brethren, that every perception of moral excellence and beauty, every feeling of obligation, and every enlightened view of the value of the soul, combine to urge the believer to pursue that course of which the apostle speaks when he says, "to me to live is Christ." And he does pursue it, imperfectly indeed, and not at all times with equal ardor—this is his sin, his burden, and his sorrow—but sincerely, earnestly, perseveringly, and with an enlightened zeal, self-

devotion, and delight, gradually increasing as he grows in grace and ripens for his Redeemer's presence.

My brethren, is it thus with you? Do you look to Christ, and rely on him as the author of spiritual and everlasting life to your souls by his atoning sacrifice and renewing grace? Do you, by faith, go to him daily in his word and ordinances for wisdom, strength, and consolation? Above all, do you habitually make it the great object of life, to honor him by seeking to know more of him, to be more like him, to love him better, and to enjoy more intimate communion with him yourselves, and by praying, and laboring, and denying yourselves, that you may promote his cause among your fellow sinners, and especially in the hearts of his people? Examine yourselves; prove yourselves; not every one that saith Lord, Lord, shall enter into his kingdom. Unless our religion exerts a transforming influence on our characters; unless it imbues us with a Christ like spirit, stamps the image of Christ upon our souls, and moulds our lives into a conformity with his example, it does not prepare us to be with Christ; it does not fit us for Heaven; and if it fails of this, no doubt it will fail to procure us admission into Heaven, and we shall be disowned of Christ at last.

Prove your own selves, therefore, and whatever you would do in this matter do it now—for the time is short—the hour of decision draws nigh—the Judge standeth before the door—soon we shall follow our departed sister into that world where no change is known, where character and destiny are fixed. Behold, saith the Lord of life and death—behold, I come quickly and my reward is with me, to give to every man according as his work shall be. Happy he who can say in the spirit of the apostle, To me to live is Christ. I know, I feel that I

am not my own; Christ is the author, the supporter, the end of life to me; I see in him supreme excellence, divine and matchless beauty. He deserves my highest esteem, my firmest confidence, my most devoted obedience. I am bound to him as my sovereign, by every tie of creating power, preserving goodness, of redeeming mercy; my interest, my honor, my happiness here and hereafter, are identified with the success of that cause for which he died; and to this cause I joyfully consecrate myself, my time, talents, property, influence, all that I have, all that I am, unreservedly, unconditionally, for ever. Let him use me and mine for his glory, and give me some humble place among his redeemed to mingle in their everlasting anthems to his praise. Happy he who can thus say to me, To live is Christ; for he may add, and to die is gain. So said the apostle when he wrote to the Philippians; and he was of the same mind when death drew nigh. I am now ready to be offered and the time of my departure is at hand; and he says to all believers: All things are yours, life and *death*, for ye are Christ's. But why was it gain for him to die? Because it was to depart and be with Christ. To know by experience that for which the Saviour prayed, as the consummation of his desires, for those to whom his love was stronger than death; Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me; to enjoy that of which the spirit saith, Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, for they rest from their labors and their works do follow them; to share that glory, a glimpse of which led the first martyr to exult amid the agonies of dissolution, while he cried, Lord Jesus receive my spirit, and which, seen by the eye of faith through the gloom of the dark valley, has lit up a smile of joy on many a pallid coun-

tenance, and drawn from many a faltering tongue the triumphant song, O grave, where is thy victory! O death, where is thy sting! How can it be otherwise? If to live be Christ, to *die* must be gain; if Christ be the object of supreme love and confidence; if the perfect knowledge of Christ, perfect conformity to his example, perfect communion with him, and the perfect accomplishment of all his holy and merciful purposes, be the centre and end of the soul's desires and hopes, there must be gain, unspeakable, eternal gain in death: for while the sinner trembles at his approach, and his hopes wither, and his joys expire in his grasp, He releases the soul that has been born from above from all its infirmities and imperfections; he severs the ties that bound it to this dark world of temptation, error, weariness and sorrow, and rends the veil that shuts out eternal glories from its eager gaze; and it rises, buoyant with immortal energies, to behold what it believed, and enjoy what it desired. Now the glorified saint proves the full efficacy of redeeming love, and, while his Saviour's glories shine upon him with unclouded radiance, feels himself transformed into his perfect likeness, sees that image reflected in all around him, is united to the general assembly and church of the first born by indissoluble bonds of love, rejoices in perfect and everlasting fellowship with them and with their Lord, and pours out in unison with theirs its notes of rapturous and endless praise. Yes, 'tis gain, immense, eternal gain, to die. Shall we then mourn for those who have fallen asleep in Jesus? Shall we mourn because they have left all that they loved on earth? because the eye once beaming with Christian affection and Christian hope, and kindling in the fervor of devotion is now closed? because the lips on which dwelt the law of kindness are sealed up, and the tongue once vocal with

accents of supplication, thanksgiving, and praise, is now silent in the grave? Ah! let us rather follow with the eye of faith the emancipated spirit, as it leaves all its infirmities, its errors, its sins, and sorrows and fears behind; and, rising to the consummation of all that it wished and hoped for here, enters the Heavenly Zion with songs and everlasting joy; and while in spirit we join the gratulations of that holy, happy company who bid it welcome to their blest abodes, let us resolve, in a devout reliance on the grace of God, to live to Christ, more entirely, more cordially, more constantly than we have ever done, that to us it may be gain to die. Die we must. The unchangeable decree of the Almighty consigns these bodies to the dark and silent tomb, and bears their immortal spirits onward to the eternal world; silently, indeed, but steadily and swiftly as the march of time. And the hour draws nigh—soon our seats will be left vacant in the house of God, and all the places that know us now will know us no more for ever. Will it be gain for us to die? If ye have sought to know and love and honor Christ as the great end of life, it will; but if you have sought pleasure, or wealth, or honor, or anything but Christ, as the end of life, oh! it will be loss—eternal loss—the loss of all things; all things earthly must be left behind, and the soul, unfit for communion with Christ and the society of his saints, must be shut out from Heaven and have its place with all the workers of iniquity.

SERMON XVI.

SEEKING GOD WITH THE WHOLE HEART.

"Ye shall seek me and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart."—JEREMIAH xxix. 13.

THUS God describes the attitude which his people must assume in order to their reception of the blessings which it was his gracious purpose to bestow upon them. Thus he teaches men in all ages what he requires of them if they would experience the fulfilment of his great and precious promises. To *find* God, in the sense of the text, is to find him gracious to us, present with us, in the favor he bears to his chosen people; to find him, as our reconciled God and Father in Christ Jesus; to find him as the strength of our hearts, the refuge, the portion, and the joy of our souls. Are you an impenitent sinner? To find God, is to find pardon through the blood of his Son; to find renovation of heart and restoration to holiness, by his Word and Spirit; to find adoption into his redeemed family, a part in his parental care, faithfulness, and love, and a sure title to life eternal through his rich mercy in Christ Jesus! Are you a child of God, but is your filial love, your veneration, your confidence low and languid, and does your heavenly Father rebuke your undutiful deportment and hide his face from you? For you to find God, is to find the light of his countenance lifted upon you; to feel his love shed abroad in your heart; to enjoy a holy and blissful communion with him in his ordinances; and, by his Spirit dwelling in you, to be

furnished for doing and suffering his will, fitted to show forth his praise, and enabled to promote his cause in the salvation of your fellow men. Do we speak of a Church of Christ? A church finds God, when God is present in her solemn assemblies and at her holy ordinances, as he was with the primitive church at and after the day of Pentecost, when they received the promise of the Father, and were all filled with the Holy Ghost; when the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul; when great grace was upon them all, and they walked in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, and the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved. How important is it, how unspeakably desirable for every person in this house, whether saint or sinner, and for this whole church, thus to find God here to-day. It may be done. God is not far from every one of us. He waits to be gracious. He tells us in the text how we may find him. May he incline our hearts now to hear and obey, that we may find him *now*.

If you would find him, you must *seek* him. "Ye shall *seek* me and ye shall find me." In the gift of his Son to die for our sins; in the full provision thus made for your pardon and your restoration to holiness; and in the gracious calls and invitations of the gospel to accept of these blessings as his free gift, and be reconciled to him through the blood of the cross; in these things God is found of them that sought him not. His holy compassion moved toward us in our sinful and perishing condition, and unsolicited, undeserved by us, he gave his unspeakable gift. So in sending to us the glad tidings of peace and pardon through the blood of the cross, when so many millions of our fellow sinners have never heard the sweet sounds of redeeming love, God is found of us; but, having made so rich a provision

for us and brought it so near to us, if we would make it our own we *must* seek it. "Seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you," are the directions legibly written over the gate of Heaven. You must feel and acknowledge that you need the blessing. You must sincerely and earnestly desire it. You must apply for it at the time and in the way which God has appointed, or you shall never have have it. Slight it, and you shall learn its value when it is for ever out of your reach. Neglect it, or the appropriate means of obtaining it, and you cannot escape. You may count the purchase of the blood of Christ so cheap a thing, as to presume it will be yours whether you seek it or not; but you will mourn at the last, when the harvest is past and the summer is ended, and you are not saved. You may cherish sloth and formality, and a worldly mind, and fancy all is well, though you do not deny yourself, nor take up the cross daily, nor follow Christ in his zeal for God and love to man; but God has said, "Woe unto them that are at ease in Zion, I will search Jerusalem with candles and punish the men that are settled on their lees." This church may say, I am rich and increased in goods, while her members do not continue with one accord in prayer and supplication, nor remove the stumbling-blocks, nor prepare the way of the Lord; but she will remain dry and barren while the dews of Heaven are descending all around her, and on her altars may be written Ichabod. God will have us to know our guilt and misery without him. He requires us to feel our dependence and our need of his gracious interposition on our behalf. We must so desire his blessing and apply for it, in the way of his appointment, that when it is bestowed we shall receive it with gratitude, and improve it with diligence, giving him the glory. "Ye shall *seek* me, and find me."

Again: you must seek God with the *heart*. God looks upon the heart; his eye is upon the secret motives that govern you. In vain may you seek him with ever so much apparent earnestness, if you cherish secret sin, and are prompted only by selfish and mercenary motives. He deals with you as moral agents, free and responsible to him for your principles of action, as well as for your conduct. He has clearly taught you his claims upon you, and your obligations to love, obey, and trust in him. He has set motives before you to persuade you to yield a willing obedience to those claims, and now he calls upon you to choose and to act for yourself. If you choose to seek after him with a willing mind and an obedient heart; if you choose to give to the care of your soul, and the concerns of eternity, that supreme attention which their importance demands; if you choose to make the exertions and the sacrifices implied in giving up the world and seeking your happiness in God; if you choose to forsake every evil way, and renounce every presumptuous hope, and to dedicate yourself wholly to God, relying upon his rich mercy in Christ Jesus for the pardon of your sins and for grace to do his will, God assures you of his readiness to receive you, of his willingness to grant you all needed aids of his Holy Spirit, and to bless you for ever with his favor, which is life, and his loving kindness, which is better than life. But if you are not willing to do this; if you cannot consent to turn your back upon the world; if, to quiet your conscience, or to build yourself up in a vain and self-righteous hope, you profess to seek God and make some partial reformation, and go through some outward forms of religious duty, while you regard iniquity in your heart, and neither cordially forsake and hate your sins nor trust in the

Lord Jesus Christ, God will not hear you, God will not be found of you. You must seek God with the *heart*.

I remark, in the last place, if you would find God, you must search for him with *all* your heart. This expression describes *intense earnestness* of desire, such as David felt when he said, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God; my soul thirsteth for God, for the living God." Such desires spring from the heartfelt conviction that one thing is needful; that it will not profit a man though he should gain the whole world and lose his own soul; that eternal things are the grand realities; that, compared with the favor of God, and an interest in the Lord Jesus Christ, all other things are vain and worthless. To search for God with all the heart, implies, moreover, a *determined purpose* to secure his favor and a part in his great salvation; a deliberate, fixed, and solemn resolution, whatever others may do, and whatever may be the consequences to ourselves, we will serve God and seek our happiness in him. Such a desire and such a purpose concentrate all the powers of the soul upon the single point of finding God, and in him life eternal. They will prompt to *exertion* for the attainment of this object; exertion made with a careful attention to the directions God has given in his word; exertion followed up with an ardor, constancy, and perseverance which nothing can divert, or dishearten, or relax. Are you a Christian? In searching for God with all your heart, you will wrestle like the patriarch, until the breaking of the day; you will say, as he said: "I will not let thee go except thou bless me." Are you unconverted? Your very soul will cry, as the jailor did, "What must I do to be saved?" or Paul, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to

do?" Does a Church of Christ search for God with all the heart? It will be found like the primitive church in that upper room at Jerusalem—all its members with one accord, in one place, *continuing* in prayer and supplication, waiting for God, in the fulfilment of his promise and the outpouring of his Spirit, more than they that wait for the morning.

It was this searching for God with *all* the heart; this fervor of desire, and decision of purpose, and entire self-devotion to the great concern of the soul which our Saviour taught, when he said, *Strive* to enter in at the strait gate, for many, I say unto you, shall *seek* to enter in, and shall not be able. Whoso forsaketh not all that he hath, cannot be my disciple; he that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that taketh not up his cross and followeth after me, cannot be my disciple. Whoso findeth his life, *i.e.*, as the connexion shows, he that spares himself and shrinks from hazarding even life in my service or at my command, shall lose it; but, whoso loseth his life for my sake, shall keep it unto life eternal. Such was the spirit of many of his primitive disciples, when they heard his call: at once they forsook all and followed him. It was in this spirit, that Zaccheus, hearing the call of Christ, made haste and received him joyfully, and standing up in the presence of a multitude said—"Behold, the half of my goods I give to the poor:" and Jesus replied—"This day is salvation come to this house." It was the want of this fixed and solemn purpose that ruined that interesting and amiable young ruler of whom we read in the Gospel: he came running to Jesus Christ, in the eagerness of a suppliant, and kneeling down before him with unaffected humility, asked with the utmost seriousness

"Good Master, what must I do, that I may inherit eternal life:" but, when he heard in reply, "Go, sell all thou hast and give to the poor, and come follow me, and thou shalt have treasure in Heaven," he went away, sorrowful—sorry that he could not be saved on easier terms. He, not willing to forsake *all* for Christ, sought God, but he did not search for him with *all his heart.* He perished, so far as we know, like many a one in this day, as moral and amiable as he, as respectful to religion, and as much concerned about the salvation of his soul, but not so fixed and decided as to be willing to make all the sacrifices, and perform all the duties, and practise all the self-denial that Christ requires. My dear hearers, if you would find God, you must search for him with all your heart; if you would assure the salvation of your soul; if you would enjoy the light of God's countenance, you must feel that this is your grand concern, you must resolve that nothing shall interfere with it, and you must *act* upon that resolution; you must compel everything else to bow to this. To your appetites and passions, to your pride, to your love of ease, to your pleasures, to your companions, to your business, you must say, Hinder me not. Thousands perish by undue or ill-timed attention to things *lawful* in themselves. These occupy their time, and these engross their thoughts and feelings, and their serious purposes are put off, and their good resolutions set aside or forgotten, till their hearts are hardened, and the Holy Spirit is quenched, and their day of grace is wasted and gone; and, as they go unprepared into eternity, they take up the bitter lamentation, "The harvest is past, and the summer is ended, and I am not saved." If you would find God, you must search for him with all your heart; you must give yourself up to this work *without any secret reserve.* It will not do for you to say,

"Thus far I will go, such and such efforts and sacrifices I am willing to make; but here is this pleasure I cannot give up, or this duty I cannot perform, or that ungodly friend I cannot displease, or that measure I cannot consent to." "All, all that the Lord commandeth will I do," must be the language, not of your lips only, but of your heart and your conduct.

You must give yourself up to this work *without any condition;* you must not say, if I feel so and so; if others do so and so; or, if God deals with me thus and thus, then I will give my whole heart to him, to trust in his mercy through Christ, and to keep all his commandments by the aid of his Spirit. No; but you must say, I will do all my duty so far as I can discover it, whether I get any comfort or not. I feel that I am perishing; something must be done; I have no other hope; I will cast myself upon his mercy; I will give myself up to his service, and if I perish, I perish; and to this unreserved and unconditional searching for God with all your heart, you must come *without any delay.* You never search after God with all your heart, till you feel that he is a present God, and resolve to find him *now.* His salvation is a present salvation,—the word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart, and behold, *now* is the accepted time; all delay when your duty is known, is known and wilful disobedience; all delay, when you have heard the call and invitations of Jesus Christ, is contempt of the blessed Jesus; all delay forfeits the promise of God—that which is a promise of a present blessing to those who are *now* obedient; all delay hardens your heart, grieves the holy spirit of God, wastes your day of grace, fills up the measure of your sins, and hastens the eternal ruin of your soul. "Ye shall seek me, and ye shall find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." Are

any of you ready to complain that these are hard terms of salvation. We have nothing to do with making the terms; our business is simply to declare them as they are laid down by the great Author of salvation, and to persuade you to accept them. To the law and to the testimony, if we speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in us. If these are his terms, and you do not like them, your controversy lies not with us, but with Him. You are free to comply with them or not; but they cannot be altered: Behold, saith he, this day I set life and death before you—a blessing and a curse—choose ye, therefore, this day, whom ye will serve. Consider how precious are the interests you have at stake; how momentous the object to be secured: to find God as your God and portion; in him to find eternal life! Is it not worth searching for with all your heart? Consider by what means these blessings have been brought within your reach, at what an expense the Son of God has provided for the salvation of your soul. Look at Gethsemane and Calvary, and say did he not toil and bleed and die to bring you nigh to God? and will you not search for him with *all your* heart? You are not called to make exertions and sacrifices upon an uncertainty; search for the Lord with *all* your heart and you *shall* find him; and are there no aids of his blessed Spirit which you may expect? no joys of pardoned sin you may experience? no peace of God that passeth understanding to keep your heart and mind though Jesus Christ? Make the experiment; you shall find that wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.

May we not learn from this subject why this church is not blessed, to the same extent with sister churches? why Christians here are not full of faith and the Holy

Ghost? and why inquiring souls are lingering and hesitating?

Let us search for God with all our hearts; and let us do it *now*.

SERMON XVII.

EARNESTNESS IN RELIGION.

"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might."—Ecclesiastes ix. 10.

The text announces a maxim of great importance. It is altogether practical in its character; it admits of a very extensive application. If we regard it simply as the fruit of the writer's reflection and experience, we may quote it to support his claim to be considered the wisest of men. In every important concern of the present life it deserves our most serious attention.

When we look upon it as the dictate of inspiration, and consider it in reference to the great concerns of the soul and the life to come, it assumes a more commanding attitude. Its claims upon us are then paramount and imperative.

Let us consider, first, its meaning, and the reasons that enforce it; and secondly, its application.

In explaining the meaning of the text it is hardly necessary to remark, that we are to do with our might only what is in itself lawful and good. Men often engage in pursuits which are in their nature sinful and ruinous. In such cases, all their ardor and energy do but hasten and aggravate their perdition. Every attainment they make is like climbing so much higher on the sides of a precipice—it will render their downfall more calamitous. So far from doing evil with our might, we are not to do it at all; we must turn away our hand from it altogether. To do with our might

what our hand findeth to do, is to act with decision and energy. There must be decision of purpose; this, as distinguished from wilful or capricious obstinacy, rests upon a rational conviction of the value of the object we seek, and the possibility of obtaining it by proper exertion; it will lead to the diligent use of all appropriate means; it will enlist all the energies of the mind in its pursuit; it will prepare a person for making any sacrifice, or practising any self-denial that may be essential to his success.

Again: to do with our might, is to act with promptness. Indifference to an object, or indecision as to the manner of pursuing it, are the great sources of delay. Let these be removed; let there be earnestness and decision; and no time will be lost. The work will be commenced without delay, and prosecuted with diligence. He who loiters in his pursuit of an object, or suffers his attention to be diverted from it, is not doing with his might what his hand findeth to do.

In the last place, to do with our might, implies persevering exertion. It stands opposed to that love of change which finds, in the novelty of an object, its chief attraction; to that fickleness which is ever ready to give up a pursuit through mere caprice, or because it meets unlooked for opposition; and to that inconstancy of spirit which passes so readily, from ardent desire and raised expectation, to disgust and despondency. He who does with his might, presses forward in pursuit of his object through every obstacle with untiring patience and unrelaxing energy till his efforts are crowned with success, or its impossibility is manifest. To do with our might whatsoever our hand findeth to do, is to act with decision, with promptness, and with untiring perseverance.

In our own nature, and in the circumstances in which

we are placed, we may find numerous and weighty reasons to enforce this maxim. We are frail, and our life is proverbially uncertain. In a moment we may be hurried away to return no more, leaving our wisest plans incomplete, and our best purposes unaccomplished. Indecision, therefore, or delay, or relaxation of effort, hazards total failure, and the entire loss of previous exertion. Our mental and physical resources, the powers of our minds, and the means at our command for carrying our purposes into effect are imperfect, limited, and comparatively feeble. If, therefore, we would not live almost in vain; if we would accomplish anything great or good, such fixedness of purpose and concentration of effort and energy as shall give to our limited resources the greatest possible efficacy, are indispensable. He who roves from object to object, and spends his strength in random or desultory effort, does but waste his life in laborious idleness.

Again: in this world which has apostatized from God and fallen under the dominion of the prince of darkness, there is an enormous mass of moral evil always in active hostility to every great and good enterprise; and this opposition is commonly violent and formidable in proportion to the importance and excellence of any good work. Nothing can be plainer than the necessity of vigor, promptness, and perseverance, when so many obstacles must be surmounted, and so much hostility overcome, in order to success. See, then, in the frailty and uncertainty of human life; in the feebleness of our powers, and the limited and imperfected nature of our means of action, and in the counteracting and opposing influences which are in motion all around us, the importance of doing whatsoever our hand findeth to do with our might.

We have already intimated that this maxim has a

most extensive application. In every lawful and valuable concern of the present life, he who disregards it may expect to labor in vain, and spend his strength for nought. Whatever is worth doing at all, is worthy of being well done. Nothing important can be thoroughly executed if it does not receive, at least for a time, earnest and exclusive attention. To every purpose there is a time and a season; he who defers it for one day beyond its proper time, subjects himself to the necessity either of neglecting it, or of permitting it to crowd out of place something else perhaps of equal importance. Prompt, vigorous, and persevering action, is the great secret of efficiency and success. It has been well understood, and practically illustrated, by those who have been most remarkable for success in worldly pursuits. They have risen to eminence, partly it may be, by the force of native powers, partly by a concurrence of favorable circumstances, but far more by intense devotion to their particular object, leading them, whatsoever their hand found to do, to do it with their might.

But the maxim has a far more interesting and important application to the great concerns of personal religion. In serving God and preparing for eternity, we must do whatsoever our hand findeth to do with our might. The work is great and arduous in itself. It must be carried on and completed in the face of opposition, and over numerous and formidable obstacles. In worldly concerns, men may sometimes stumble upon success. Not so here. The way of life is a straight and narrow way. Over the threshold is written, "*Strive* to enter in, many shall seek and shall not be able." "Whoever forsaketh not *all that he hath*, cannot be my disciple." In such a work, mere knowledge is vain; wishes are idle. Resolutions are worse than fruitless, without vigorous, prompt, persevering action. This is

true of the whole course, and it is equally true of every several step in the way of life. In each effort to mortify sin and to cultivate holiness; in the use of every means of grace; in the performance of each duty, personal, relative, and social, we must do with our might, we must give our whole attention to the work, our whole souls must be thrown into it, or our expectations of profit and acceptance are unauthorized and vain. In every concern of personal piety one hour of intense application of the whole soul to divine and eternal things is worth more than days or weeks of comparative formality and lukewarmness. To such exertion God has promised his blessing, without which all our efforts will be unsuccessful. "Ye shall seek me," saith he, "and ye shall find me, when ye shall search for me with *all your heart.*" "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might."

In the last place, this maxim applies with peculiar force to every enterprise and effort for promoting the glory of God in the salvation of men, and to none more than to that form of benevolence which has called us together to-day. Every plan to do good to the souls of men has to encounter a two-fold opposition; it is opposed by the sloth, unbelief, and selfishness of those who must be active agents in its execution, and by the indifference, worldly-mindedness, and aversion to holiness of those for whose benefit it is designed; and delay in the execution of such plans is doubly hazardous, because both the agents and the objects are liable to be summoned in a moment beyond the sphere of activity and the possibility of change. And the more pure and excellent any enterprise is, the more bitter and determined is the opposition it will commonly meet from the god of this world, and from the maxims, fashions, and spirit of ungodly men. The more certainly there-

fore will it fail, if its advocates do not engage in it with an ardent zeal, an inflexible constancy, and a generous and entire self-devotion. Plans to do good to others must ever depend more or less for their success upon their voluntary coöperation. This we cannot expect when we come into collision with their opinions, feelings, or habits, unless we enter into the work with our whole hearts. If they see us lukewarm, dilatory, or inconstant, they will hardly give us credit for sincerity. So far from enlisting them under our banner, we shall but confirm their indifference or opposition. They will find it very easy, and think it very safe to disregard that which does not awaken the ardor and energy of its avowed advocates.

On the other hand, if we are seen engaging in the work with the zeal and energy of men who feel its immense and immediate importance, determined to lose no opportunity, and to leave untried no lawful means of promoting it, we shall carry along with us many who would otherwise have stood neutral, and witness, in many cases, hostility transformed into friendship. Our decision and consistency will secure confidence, command respect, daunt, if not disarm opposition, and lodge in the consciences of our enemies a testimony for the truth of incalculable value. How important, then, in every plan for doing good to the souls of men, that we do with our might whatsoever our hand findeth to do.

We live in an age of benevolent enterprise and action. This is true of every Christian land. It is preëminently true of our own country. Here is no corrupt and corrupting alliance of Church and State. Here religion is unfettered by the ordinances of man. Here truth, in its simplicity, is brought into contact with a larger mass of cultivated mind than can be elsewhere found. The

consequence is, that every year witnesses some new enterprise to arrest the growth of impiety and vice; to dispel ignorance and error; to multiply converts to truth, holiness, and happiness. In all these, there is vitality, there is energy, there is activity. They move, and their course is onward. As they go forward, their strength increases; their resources are augmented; the sphere of action widens upon their view; they form bolder plans; they carry them into effect with more rapid and signal success. No doubt they shall ultimately and gloriously triumph. Not perhaps precisely in their present form, but substantially as to their grand object, completely and for ever. For the Scriptures cannot be broken, and it is written, "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord; all nations shall call him blessed!" But how shall this glorious consummation be attained? No doubt by the blessing of God upon the prayers and efforts of his people. But to what kind of prayers and efforts will He grant the blessing? Will they be lukewarm, dilatory, and inconstant? Will He work miracles to render efficient feeble, slothful, and half in earnest exertions? We have no reason to expect it. It was not thus that the great Captain of salvation laid the foundations of that spiritual temple in which all nations shall yet offer incense and a pure offering to his name. It was not thus that the apostles and martyrs of primitive times built up the walls, and brought so many to worship in it; nor is it thus that the topmost stone shall be brought forth, with shouting, Grace, Grace unto it. No, brethren, the mantle of that ascended prophet who said, "It is my meat and my drink to do the will of my Father, and to finish his work," must descend upon his followers.

There must be, throughout the church, a spiritual resurrection of those who counted not their lives dear,

that they might finish their course with joy. All the friends of Christ must feel the force of his last command, "Go preach my Gospel to every creature," and gird themselves for prayer and effort, doing whatsoever their hands find to do with their might. When they thus proclaim redemption through the blood of Jesus, the Spirit of God will swell the notes, and like the trump of the archangel, it will wake the slumbering nations, and they shall stand up and adore and bless Immanuel. In that day the Bible will be translated into every tongue; it will be circulated in every nation; it will be possessed, and read, and obeyed, and loved in every family. It is no inferior part, in leading on that blessed consummation, which Bible Societies have undertaken. The Bible is the sun that must dispel the gloom of ignorance, and sin, and error, which has so long brooded over benighted and dying men. From this fountain must gush out those streams of salvation that shall gladden the wilderness, and make the desert and the solitary place rejoice. This is the tree of life whose fruit is immortality, and whose leaves are for the healing of the nations. And this universal distribution of the Bible must be effected by the earnest, self-denying, persevering exertions of Christians engaging in the work, and doing with their might what their hands find to do. Copies of the word of life will not be multiplied and distributed by miracle, but by the strenuous, united efforts of those who love the Bible and are imbued with its spirit, applying their hearts and hands, their prayers and contributions, to forward the work. It is in this way, my brethren, that this Word must be carried to every destitute family on the face of the earth. And they are sparsely scattered over a wide extent of country, in many parts difficult of access; and there is apathy, and prejudice, and opposition of all

sorts, even among professing Christians, to be encountered and surmounted before they can be supplied. More than two thirds of this destitution is, indeed, covered by resolutions of local societies. But how many of these resolutions are like our own! The work is arduous indeed. It will never be done, unless they who love the Bible will arise and pray, and contribute and labor with their might.

Great and difficult as it is, it is practicable. It has been done in other States—in New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, and Maryland; in eight others it is nearly completed; in the Carolinas and Georgia it is in a state of forwardness. And shall it be said that Virginia alone is unable or unwilling to give the Bible to her destitute population? Is there not benevolence and energy enough among us to do the work? Experience has shown that there is. There are few parts of the Commonwealth where the people will not contribute enough to supply themselves, provided books are sent to them, and suitable agents to call their attention to the subject. The books are already prepared in the depository of the Parent Society, and may be had. The experience we have acquired has taught us some valuable lessons as to the best manner of laboring in the work. The plan of operations is now organized, and the machinery is in motion. The work may be completed this year, if the friends of the Bible in this city will begin to-day to do with their might. Let our calculations be made to-day to finish the work during the present year.

A recent communication from the Parent Society speaks thus:—"Let books be sent for at once by societies who can pay for them now, or in three, six, or nine months. Let them be requested as a donation when they cannot be purchased. Let agents, ministers

of the Gospel, editors of religious papers, and friends of the Bible of every denomination, urge on this glorious work. Let supplication ascend from every pulpit, every monthly concert, every family altar, and every pious heart, that the Lord would give free course to his word, and we may yet rejoice, in 1831, that our entire nation is blessed with the oracles of God." Shall Virginia form the solitary exception at that time? We believe it will not. What a blessed result it will be; what a testimony in favor of our free institutions; what a refutation of the slanders of enemies, and the fears of mistaken friends, that religion cannot be supported without a connexion with the State.

SERMON XVIII.

IMMEDIATE SUBMISSION.

"The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that is, the word of faith which we preach."—ROMANS x. 8.

THE gospel of Jesus Christ, is here called "the word of faith." It is so called because it reveals God's method of justifying and saving sinners by faith. Because it offers to all who hear it, salvation from sin and death, upon their believing it with their whole hearts; because it is worthy of the full, immediate, and cordial belief of all who hear it; and because the very end and design of God in causing it to be recorded in the Bible and proclaimed by the living herald of the cross, is that men may believe and be saved. When the apostle asserts that the word is nigh to those who read or hear it, he does not mean, simply, that certain ideas are distinctly conveyed to their minds by the significant letters and syllables which meet the eye, or the articulate sounds that fall upon the ear in reading or hearing. No, he speaks of the living realities which are revealed in the word; of the glorious Saviour whom the word sets forth; of the complete and free salvation which the word offers. This, the connexion shows. It is the righteousness of faith, that speaketh on this wise: "Say not in thine heart, who shall ascend into Heaven, that is to bring Christ down from above, or who shall descend into the deep, that is to bring Christ up again from the dead." But what saith it: "The word is *nigh* thee." The word, not in the letter, but in the Spirit, living and

powerful; a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart, able to give life to the dead; *salvation* to every one that believeth; *Christ*, in his power and in his mercy; Lord over all, and rich unto all them that call upon him. So that whosoever, hearing and believing the word, calleth upon him as a present Saviour, shall now be saved; saved from sin and wrath by his blood and Spirit, not at some future time or some other place, but here and now.

The doctrine of the text then, is that salvation is brought *very nigh* to men in the gospel; so nigh that there is no long interval to be passed over before they may come to it and know and feel that it is present—so nigh, that no tedious preparatory work is to be performed, before they are permitted to receive and rejoice in it. Far from it; it is brought so very nigh in the gospel call and offer, that while men hear it, they have only to open their hearts to it, and it enters at once in its blessed reality and power. They have only to believe, and be saved; they have only to obey and live. Let me invite your attention to the illustrations of this truth.

Nothing is more common than a vague indistinct impression, on the part of sinners who hear the gospel, that after all Christ has done for their salvation, there is still a great deal to be done by them, before they are required or even permitted to trust in Christ as their Saviour, and to give themselves up to him. When they are partially awakened and begin to feel that they need a Saviour, they think, to use a common phrase, that it will take them a *great while* to get religion. Having sinned so long, and wandered so far from God, they think it quite out of the question, that they should return to him, be saved from their sins, and restored to his favor at once. Hence they practically deny the

sincerity of God's offers of immediate pardon and regeneration; they turn aside the point and urgency of God's calls to immediate repentance and faith in Christ. The faint emotions of desire after salvation, which the word and spirit of God had begun to awaken in their hearts, are discouraged and repressed; the Holy Spirit is resisted; sin and Satan take advantage of these false notions, to persuade men to wait for a more convenient season before they enter upon a work so tedious and difficult as that of coming to Christ for salvation. They go out from under the sound of the word, and speedily lose any impression it may have made upon them; next time they hear it, the same process is repeated with greater facility than before; thus they pursue a course of guilty delay and unceasing obduracy, until the patience of God is exhausted, their day of grace spent, and they are sealed up in final impenitence, for everlasting woe. So, where men are powerfully awakened and deeply concerned at the condition and prospects of their souls, and even when they are so far convinced of sin as to feel that they cannot make themselves better, they still think that God must do something more than he has already done in the way of preparing them for Christ, by increasing their convictions and breaking their hard hearts, before it is their duty or privilege to come to Christ and accept of salvation as his free gift; and here very often, they linger, indulging pride and self-will, even complaining of God in their hearts because he does not give them such convictions as they think others have, and they must have, before they can believe and be saved. I say here they linger until the Spirit of God, who is all this time striving with them, to bring them to repentance, and whom they are resisting, is provoked to forsake them, and they are given up to hardness of heart and blindness of mind, and go

down to hell. Now this is the very thing God warns you not to do, when he says, Say not in thine heart, who shall ascend into Heaven to bring Christ down, or who shall go down into the deep, to bring Christ up, as if he was far off, and you could not come to him; —no, Christ is nigh thee, even now, very nigh, in thy mouth and in thy heart, by his word and Spirit, and in the fulness of his saving power and mercy, and thou mayest be saved now; thou mayest be pardoned and regenerated and made a child of God to-day, in this place, if thou wilt now do your indispensable duty. This is the point we wish to establish and illustrate from the Bible.

I remark, first: Salvation is brought very nigh to you to-day in the Gospel, because the provisions of the Gospel are exactly suited to your condition and character. You are to-day sinners, and Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners; you are to-day destitute of the favor of God, shut out from communion with God, and in imminent danger of everlasting banishment from the presence of God, and of sinking down under the frown of God into everlasting woe; and because you are so wretched and lost, the great and holy God has compassion on you, and has sent his Son to die for your salvation: "God so loved the world that he sent his only beloved Son to die." Was it not a guilty and fallen world for which God did this? Was it not for the lost? and are you not so to-day?

The meritorious cause of the salvation offered in the Gospel is the atoning sacrifice, the perfect obedience, and the prevalent intercession of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the only ground of hope to every sinner on earth—he has obeyed, he has suffered, and he ever lives to intercede for sinners who can make no atonement for their own sins, offer no obedience of their own which

a righteous God can accept, and while impenitent and unpardoned, can present no prayer which God will hear. Now, is not this your case to-day? The effectual application of this salvation is by the power of the Holy Spirit enlightening the dark mind, renewing the perverse and stubborn will, and changing and purifying the depraved and unholy heart. Now, is not your mind spiritually dark, your will stubborn and averse to holiness, and your heart hard and full of sin to-day? Is not this salvation, having for its origin the compassion of God to the perishing; for its meritorious cause the atoning blood, the perfect righteousness and the prevalent intercession of Christ; and for its efficient agent the Holy Spirit in his enlightening, renewing, and purifying operations upon the soul—is not this salvation just suited to your condition and character to-day? Is it not nigh you? Are you not at this moment just prepared for it? You are guilty as a transgressor of God's holy law. Here is an atonement which magnifies that law and makes it honorable. You are under a sentence of condemnation. Here is a free and full pardon. You are at enmity with the Holy God, and dead in trespasses and sins. Here are influences of the Spirit to subdue that enmity, impart spiritual life to your soul, and fill you with love to God and to his service. Who can need such influences if you do not? and when, if not now? You are living without God, and have no hope. Here is reconciliation to God, adoption into his family, a hope full of immortality, and an incorruptible inheritance. You are utterly unworthy. Here is a salvation all of grace, free, sovereign grace; not of work, lest any man should boast; but of grace, that man may be humbled, and God have all the glory. Now does not this salvation precisely suit your condition to-day? *Is it not* nigh you now? Are you not just fit to-day

to be pardoned, regenerated, adopted into the family of God, and filled with the hope of immortality by the rich unmerited love and mercy of God to those who deserve nothing but his wrath? Well, this is the salvation of the Gospel; and it is nigh you, because it is precisely adapted to your condition, character, and wants to-day.

I remark, secondly: The salvation of the Gospel is brought nigh to you to-day, because its invitations and offers are to you just as you are to-day. What are the invitations of the Gospel, and to whom are they addressed? "Wisdom crieth without," Jesus Christ the wisdom of God. And to whom? "To you, O men! I call, and my voice is to the sons of men; how long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity, and the scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge! Turn ye at my reproof! behold I will pour out my Spirit upon you." So Jesus said, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Did he not come to call you? So he commissioned his disciples, "Go preach my Gospel to every creature; go preach repentance and remission of sins to all nations." And how did they understand their commission? Let facts answer. The very first Gospel sermon ever preached was to those who had taken with wicked hands, and crucified, and slain, the Lord of glory; and their Master bore witness to their fidelity in inviting these sinners to come to him just as they were, for he sent his Spirit down, and that very day three thousand of those sinners believed in him and were saved. "Look unto me," he saith, "and be ye saved *all the ends of the earth*, for I am God, and there is none else." "Come unto me *all ye* that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Is there a sinner in this house who is not included in these invitations? And are they not sent

to you simply in the character of sinners, just as you are here to-day? And to what are you invited? What are the blessings offered to you? "Behold I will pour out my Spirit upon you: I will make known my words unto you." "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool!" "Be saved; take the water of life freely; I will give you rest." Now are not these invitations and offers just suited to you to-day? Do they not reach you now? Must you wait for any change before it is both your privilege and your duty to accept these invitations, and embrace these offers as they are freely tendered to you by the compassion of God to-day? No, my hearers. Salvation is brought very nigh you; you may receive the Spirit, have your sins pardoned, drink of the water of life, and in one word be saved here now. Nay, you must, or reject the invitations of God, and slight and despise a Saviour's love. The call of God reaches you here now, and you cannot take another step without obeying it, or trampling upon it at the peril of your soul. The word is nigh thee. These invitations and offers are made to you by the command of Christ: in his Word, by his servants, by his Holy Spirit. For what are the strivings of the Spirit, but his efforts to impress upon your hearts the calls of Christ? And with whom does he *strive*, but with those who resist and rebel? And Christ, whose offers they are, is present here also; present to mark your reception of his message to-day; present to make good his promise if you will not harden your heart; present to record your refusal against a coming day, if you dare despise his offers.

I remark in the third place: salvation is brought nigh to you now, because its terms are just such as you *may*, and ought *now* to comply with. What are the

terms of salvation? You may find them in the next verse: "Confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus; believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, and thou shalt be saved." Now, how long are you at liberty to put off a compliance with these terms? When is it your duty to acknowledge him whom God hath exalted, and given him a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and every tongue confess that he is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." When is it your duty to acknowledge him as your Lord and Master, and to give yourself up to him as your Redeemer from sin and death? When is it your duty to give your full and cordial assent and consent to the whole testimony of God concerning Jesus Christ, and salvation through his blood? When, I say, are these things your duty? Verily, *now!* You may not put it off—no, not a day, nor an hour, without great guilt, and at the peril of yo ur soul! Every moment you delay, every moment you remain, you disobey the known command of your Holy Sovereign, and practically make the God of truth a liar. Take another statement of the terms of salvation: "Repent ye and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." Who are here called upon to forsake sin and turn to God with your whole heart, but you who are to-day living in sin, and at this very moment refusing to give your heart to God? And when is this your duty? How long may you live in known sin? How long may you persevere in the wicked opposition of your heart to God? Not a day, nor an hour, nor a moment, but at the risk of eternal woe! The terms of salvation are such as every sinner in this house not only may comply with, but is most solemnly bound to comply with here, to-day, now! But comply with these terms and you are saved; your sins are pardon-

ed; you receive the Holy Ghost to regenerate and sanctify you, and fit you for Heaven. The word is *nigh thee;* and this doctrine, that salvation is brought very nigh to sinners in the Gospel, precisely corresponds with the express and oft repeated declarations of God in his Word. In what language does he there address you on this subject? He *now* commands all men everywhere to repent. "I have heard thee," saith he, "in an accepted time, and in a day of salvation have I succoured thee. Behold, *now* is the accepted time! behold, *now* is the day of salvation!" We beseech you, therefore, as workers together with Him, that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. Ye do this if you delay. For lo! he limiteth a certain time, saying, "To-day, after so long a time," as the Holy Ghost saith, "To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." Can anything be more plain or express than these words of God? Sinners, they meet you here to-day! You cannot refuse now to be saved, without despising all his counsel, and setting at naught all his reproof! Will you do this? Ponder well the consequences before you venture. God meets you with the call to repentance, and the offer of salvation, just where you are now. He throws all his authority and his grace right across your path. You must be saved here to-day; you cannot take another step. No, not a step in the path of impenitence, and unbelief, and condemnation, without wilfully trampling upon his love. Surely the word is *nigh*, then.

We might bring further illustration of this truth, were it necessary, from the examples recorded in the New Testament. Look at the woman of Samaria in the 4th chapter of John. Take the case of Zaccheus in the 19th of Luke. What case more unlikely! Look at the penitent thief upon the cross; the three thousand on the day of Pentecost; Paul; the jailor; one minute on the verge

of suicide, the next, asking what he shall do to be saved.

All speak the same language: that the sinner who hears the call of Christ, has salvation brought very nigh to him; so nigh, that he may be saved; that he ought to be saved while he listens to it, without a moment's delay. Yes, sinner! at this moment salvation is nigh to you. Nothing but your own unbelief and impenitence prevents you from seeing it; yea, from experiencing it, and rejoicing in it now. Christ is now here; he offers you pardon and eternal life; he is knocking now at the door of your heart. Will you persist in impenitence and unbelief a day or an hour, in the delusive hope you may thus be brought near? No, you will be further off as long as you refuse to obey and live. Because, every hour you continue in this spirit, you increase the impenitence and unbelief that separates you from Christ and salvation.

What will you do while you are preparing to believe and obey? Will you read? will you pray? and all with an impenitent unbelieving heart? God will not hear you. "If I regard iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear me." Will you seek deeper conviction? What, by resisting the Holy Spirit! No: your heart will grow harder and harder; you can do nothing good, nothing acceptable; nothing but what is offensive to God; nothing that is not damning to your soul, till you repent and believe. And this you may do now, for the word is nigh thee. Of this you will one day be convinced; perhaps when it is for ever too late.

SERMON XIX.

THE ALMOST CHRISTIAN.

"Then Agrippa said unto Paul, almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."—Acts xxvi. 28.

In these words a prosperous and thorough-going man of the world acknowledged the impression made upon his mind, by the preaching of the gospel. Agrippa was now in the prime of life. He was proud, ambitious, enterprising, and a lover of pleasure more than of God. He possessed power, honor, wealth, and ample means and opportunities of gratifying appetite and passion. His history shows that no regard to principle restrained him from using, or rather abusing, these talents to selfish ends. He was surrounded by dependents and flatterers ever ready to foster his passions, and to minister to his vices and follies. He heard the gospel under circumstances adapted to render him insensible to its appeals. He had come to pay a visit of congratulation to Festus, the Roman governor. While there he learned that Paul, a ringleader of the Nazarenes, a sect everywhere spoken against, was at that time a prisoner under charges preferred against him by the chief priests and rulers of the Jews. Prompted by curiosity, or perhaps merely for the sake of pastime, he expressed desire to hear him; "To-morrow," said the governor, "thou shalt hear him." Accordingly on the morrow, these great men, with their retinues, and a numerous and brilliant assemblage, entered into the place of hearing. Paul was brought forth wearing his fetters, and told that he might speak

for himself. With great plainness and simplicity, yet with an affectionate earnestness of manner, expressive of conscious sincerity and of love to his Master and to the souls of his hearers, Paul addressed them. He spoke of his early life, of his zeal against Christianity, and his efforts to destroy it, of his remarkable conversion in the midst of his furious bigotry and persecuting rage, of his commission to preach the gospel and its holy and benevolent object, of his labors, successes, and sufferings in executing that commission. In all this, he declared known facts, and he appealed to living witnesses, in attestation of what he said. In conclusion he called their attention to the predictions of these very events in the sacred writings of the Jews; predictions recorded as they knew centuries before, and now literally and minutely fulfilled. And he closed the whole by a direct appeal to the understanding and the conscience of Agrippa himself. That appeal was at the moment irresistible; it reached his heart; it drew from him the unpremeditated and almost involuntary reply, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." Others seem to have felt similar impressions. The whole assembly rose up and dispersed evidently with feelings very different from those with which they had come together, very unlike those of mere gratified curiosity. The principal persons expressed to each other their conviction that Paul was both sincere and innocent; and, whatever they might think of the application of his doctrine to themselves, that he had done nothing worthy of death or of bonds. Whether any of them now forsook their sins, and fled for refuge to the hope set before them, we are not informed. Agrippa himself, if history may be credited, soon lost his serious impressions, gave himself up to the dominion of appetite and passion, filled up his term of probation without prepar-

ing for eternity, and at last died in sin, to meet that Saviour whose disciple he was now almost persuaded to become, as his righteous Judge.

The case before us, is not a singular one. It is no uncommon thing for similar impressions to be made upon those who hear the gospel. The same causes which rendered religious impressions fruitless in this instance, operate with similar power upon the minds of hundreds and thousands at the present day; and the result is still the same: the heart is hardened, the Spirit of God is resisted, and the sinner, once on the threshold of the kingdom of Heaven, dies in his sins and is for ever banished from the presence of Infinite Purity.

Let us examine the state of Agrippa's mind at this time, and trace his subsequent course and the causes of it a little more in detail, and then consider the application of the subject to ourselves. It is evident that his attention was awakened to the doctrines of the gospel. What he had wished to hear merely for amusement, or to gratify curiosity, urged itself upon his attention as a practical concern of great importance, and personally interesting to himself. It awakened in his mind thoughts and feelings in relation to his own obligation and responsibility, and his prospects beyond the grave, till that hour unknown. He felt that he ought to investigate and decide upon its claims. He laid aside, for the moment, the attitude of thoughtless scepticism, or careless stupidity, and assumed that of awakened attention and serious inquiry.

It is evident, moreover, that he was convinced of the truth of the gospel. Paul's account of his own conversion, was, if true, a demonstration of this; and his testimony to it taken in connexion with his known previous character, his whole subsequent course, and his appear-

ance before Agrippa that day, was worthy of the fullest credit. His statement of undoubted facts, concerning the character and doctrines of Jesus, and the wide and successful promulgation of the gospel, formed another strong and conclusive argument that the gospel must be the power of God unto salvation. And his appeal to the prophetic writings of the Old Testament, so remarkably fulfilled in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, confirmed the whole argument, and established beyond all reasonable doubt the truth of the gospel. For the moment, Agrippa was convinced. His understanding assented to the truth; he received the truth, but he believed not in the love of it, he believed not with his *heart* unto salvation.

It seems evident, again, that the truth reached his conscience, and took hold of his feelings. He saw something of its application to himself; through the clouds of prejudice and passion, the light gleamed in upon his soul, not in its clear and steady radiance, but by glimpses, startling though transient. "This man," he perhaps said to himself, "is neither an impostor nor an enthusiast. He speaks words of truth and soberness. Jesus of Nazareth is indeed the Messiah, sent of God for the salvation of men. I need an interest in him as well as others. I am a sinner; I am exposed to the wrath of God; I am immortal; I must give an account of myself to my offended Judge; my rank, and power, and wealth, and the flatteries of my dependents, will not avail anything at the awful tribunal of God. Pardon and eternal life are offered to me now. Perhaps if I reject them now they may retire for ever beyond my reach. This may be the only opportunity of making my peace with God." Such may have been his thoughts and feelings, as he listened to the clear and forcible arguments of the apostle, uttered with all the affectionate and impressive

earnestness of one, whose heart glowed with love to God and man, and who felt that, under the eye of his Master, he delivered a message fraught with life or death to his fellow sinners; and when he was personally addressed in that pointed appeal, "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets?" the preacher reading in his countenance the emotions of his soul, and immediately adding, "I know that thou believest," he could no longer keep silent. In the presence of that whole assembly, he declared, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." I am almost ready to lay my honors, my riches, myself, at the feet of Jesus; to own him as my Lord, trust in him as my Redeemer, devote my all to his service, and join myself at every hazard to his despised and persecuted followers. Happy had it now been for Agrippa, had he followed the convictions of his judgment, obeyed the dictates of his conscience, yielded to the gracious movements of the Spirit of God, and, by one honest, earnest, determined effort, renounced the world as his portion, cast himself upon the mercy of God in Christ Jesus as the only foundation of his hope, and laid hold upon the promise of eternal life through him. Thus, he might, indeed, have lost his earthly crown, have subjected himself to the scorn and hatred of those ungodly men by whom he was surrounded, and have blighted his prospects of prolonged and increasing honor, wealth, and power in this dying world. But instead of these, he had tasted that peace of God which the world cannot give or take away, rejoiced in sweet and holy communion and fellowship with a risen and glorified Redeemer, and felt the cheering influence of a hope full of immortality shining upon him in every dark passage of his mortal journey, irradiating the dark valley of the shadow of death, and conducting him to those pure and blissful abodes,

where they whose robes are washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb, live and reign with Christ for ever and ever. Then, like Paul, he had finished his course with joy, and with him had now worn a crown of righteousness, and joined in the everlasting anthems of the skies. But he hesitated; he refused to decide; he disobeyed the authority and rejected the mercy of God; he broke up the assembly; he retired not to serious meditation and prayer in his closet, but to mingle in the circles of rank, and splendor, and affluence, and yield himself up to the dominion of pride, ambition, and the love of pleasure. He, no doubt, felt that it would cost him too much self-denial, and interfere too seriously with his worldly plans and prospects, to cherish his serious impressions and yield to the dictates of his enlightened conscience, and his sober judgment. He therefore sought to content himself for the present with expressing his conviction of the innocence of Paul and the excellence of his doctrines, and making some resolutions of attending seriously to the whole subject at some future convenient season. He, no doubt, sought to dismiss it for the present from his mind, as it interrupted his pursuits and pleasures, and made his conscience uneasy.

In this there is reason to believe he was fatally successful. All that we know of his subsequent history, though it presents him to us as an amiable man, furnishes no evidence that he ever became a disciple of Jesus. We are not informed that he ever heard the gospel, or had the offer of mercy extended to him again. We do know that by his indecision and procrastination on this occasion he hardened his heart, and grieved the Holy Spirit of God. We have every reason to believe that his serious impressions were speedily and effectually erased; that he became more thought-

less and worldly minded than before; that he sinned away his day of grace, and died at last impenitent, unpardoned, unfit for Heaven, to learn at the bar of his righteous Judge how great a salvation he had neglected, and what aggravated guilt and awful condemnation he had incurred. His judgment was convinced, his conscience was awakened, his hopes and fears were moved; but his heart was wedded to the world, his heart was not right in the sight of God, and he lived and died in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity.

In the practical improvement of this subject, I remark

First: Cases like that of Agrippa are very common under the faithful preaching of the Gospel. God does not leave his Word without a witness to the hearts and consciences of men. The influences of his Holy Spirit accompany it, and make it quick and powerful, and a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. In its faithful delineations of human character, in its striking descriptions of man's condition as a sinner, in its perfect adaptation to the conscious necessities and evils of our fallen nature, in its powerful appeals to the innate sense of obligation and responsibility which we can scarcely shake off, in its clear and solemn manifestations of the moral government of God, in those sublime and awful realities which it reveals as the objects of our hopes and fears beyond the grave, it is fitted to make, and it does make, deep impressions upon the human mind; it commands the assent of thousands to its truth, its requirements, and its excellences, who never cordially bow to its authority, and never receive it into their hearts by a living faith, never adopt it as the rule of their lives and the charter of their hopes. Many a time, while men listen to it, it dispels the doubts, and *cavils*, and sophistries of an evil heart of unbelief; dis-

sipates the mists of prejudice and passion; and dissolves the enchantments of this dying world. They feel for the time that it is the voice of their Saviour and their Judge; that he speaks to them in accents of infinite authority and love; and that all their dearest interests, for time and eternity, are involved in what he says. They are convinced, they are moved, they are almost persuaded; they resolve to neglect it no longer; they purpose, without delay, to seek through Jesus Christ pardon for sin, peace with God, and preparation for death and judgment. But presently they recollect some worldly plan not yet accomplished; some sinful pleasure not easily forsaken; some ungodly associates, whose ridicule or scorn they are not willing to encounter; some Christian duty or self-denial they know not how to practise. A deceitful heart suggests that some future time to embrace religion will be as safe, and much more convenient; and they first hesitate, and then conclude to put off for a season the calls of God and the concerns of eternity. They go out into the world, engage in its pursuits, taste its pleasures, and mingle in its society. Thus their good resolutions melt away; their serious impressions are speedily effaced; they fall into the snares of the devil, are absorbed by the objects of time and sense, and forget God, and their souls, and the unseen world. Again their attention is arrested by some solemn truth of the Word of God, aided, perhaps, by some affecting dispensation of Providence; again their judgments are convinced, their consciences are aroused, their feelings are excited; again they form resolutions, defer their execution under some vain though plausible pretext, fall into the snares of their spiritual enemies, and voluntarily surrender themselves anew to the dominion of the world, the flesh, or the devil. Thus their day of grace passes

away, and at last they are overtaken by death, and hurried away to judgment ere they have made their peace with God, or completed their preparation for eternity.

My dear hearers: could we now read those pages in the book of God's omniscience, when your moral history is recorded by an unerring hand, how many of you would appear to be pursuing this very course!

I remark secondly: The case of those who are almost persuaded to be Christians, and yet pursue the world as a portion, and neglect the great salvation of the Gospel, is most deplorable. Your being almost persuaded does not and cannot save you from sin and death. If you were starving, it would not satisfy your appetite to have food placed almost within your reach; nor would it heal you when sick, to be almost persuaded to call in a physician; nor release you, if under sentence of death, to almost succeed in obtaining a pardon. So your being *almost* persuaded will not reconcile you to God, nor unite you to Christ, nor prepare you for Heaven. Your souls must famish and die, and sink under the penalty of God's violated law, notwithstanding all your convictions of the truth and excellence of religion, all your serious impressions, all your half in earnest purposes and unexecuted resolutions to repent. But, my dear hearers, though these things will not save you, they may embarrass your pursuit of earthly good, and embitter your enjoyment of earthly pleasure. They may disquiet you in the hour of retirement and sober thought; make you more disconsolate than ordinary sinners under disappointments, dangers, and sorrows; and multiply sevenfold the anguish and terror of a dying hour.

If the heart is hardened, and the Spirit of God is *grieved*—in proportion to the light which a sinner re-

sists, and the motives against which he sins—who so likely as you to become obdurate and insensible? who is so likely to be speedily deserted and abandoned by the Spirit of Grace? How awful is the condition of that sinner concerning whom God hath said, "He is joined to idols, let him alone;" who lives only to fill up the measure of his iniquities and ripen for his awful doom.

Jesus Christ has declared, "To whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required;" and again, "The servant who knew his Lord's will and did it not, shall be beaten with many stripes." Look at your character and condition in the light of these truths, and consider how great is your guilt, how appalling your danger, how deep and uncommon your perdition, if, like Agrippa, you should at last die impenitent and unforgiving!

A third practical inference from the subject is this: The perdition of impenitent sinners is voluntary. I speak now of impenitent sinners, who, like Agrippa, hear the Gospel of Christ.

If such perish, it is not because there is any defect in the evidences of the truth of the Gospel. These are such as Infinite Wisdom has chosen. They have ever satisfied candid and serious inquirers. We do not now see those miracles which were wrought in primitive times; but we have these attested to us by credible witnesses; we have the evident and wonderful fulfilment of prophecy; we have the Word itself bearing the marks of its divine author; we see its influence, and have it confirmed to us by those who feel it. Many, like Agrippa, are convinced, though they do not repent. If others are not convinced, it is because they will not examine. Their sin is voluntary.

Nor is it because the provisions of the Gospel are insufficient. These are adequate to the salvation of the world. It was God's purpose to make them so: "God

so loved the world that he sent his Son, that *whosoever* believeth should not perish;" "Behold I bring you glad tidings, which shall be to all people." Christ's work of atonement was complete and perfect. It laid a broad foundation for pardon, and restoration to holiness. "His blood cleanseth from all sin."

There is nothing exclusive in the invitations and offers of the Gospel. He directed his apostles to preach repentance and remission to all men. Men are invited simply as sinners, suffering under the effects of the fall. All such, everywhere, are invited to come and live.

Here, then, is a perfect warrant to every one who hears the invitation, to appropriate to himself the full and perfect provisions of the Gospel, as perfect to all as the truth and love of God can make. And there is no inflexible decree compelling men to reject these invitations, no hard necessity binding them to sin and to suffer; and God has presented all possible motive to repentance and faith; he has instituted an admirable system of means for this very end; if men neglect them they do it voluntarily; and he sends his Spirit along with these means, so that men are often convinced, awakened, moved, almost persuaded.

Where, then, shall we find the cause of the sinner's perdition? Where God charges it in his Word, "Thou hast destroyed thyself;" where conscience charges it; where it will assuredly be found in the great day of trial; in his own voluntary rejection of mercy.

Yes, fellow sinners, if after all that has been done for you, you die in your sins, your blood will be upon your own head. If you stand before your Judge, impenitent and unbelieving, you will stand there speechless. If you go down to everlasting burnings, you will go there under the full conviction that you are self-ruined.

How full of anguish the recollection, while the waves and billows of eternal woe are rolling over your lost soul, that once you were almost persuaded to be saved, but you willingly turned away, and by your own weight sank into the burning lake.

How will you meet your Judge, or how answer at his bar, when he spreads out before you the full and perfect delineation of your whole course, and says to you, "I called, I entreated, I warned, I besought you; I sent my Spirit, and ye would not come; you were almost persuaded; but you turned away; you set at naught my counsels; now, therefore, eat of the fruit of your doings, and be filled with your own desires."

Oh! be persuaded this day to become not almost, but altogether, the humble, devoted disciples of Jesus; be persuaded now to cast yourselves, with broken and contrite hearts, at the foot of the cross. He will receive you, and you shall know the peace of God which passeth understanding.

SERMON XX.

PANTING AFTER GOD.

"As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God."—PSALM xlii. 1, 2.

THIS, my brethren, is the language of true devotion; of devotion stripped of every adventitious appendage, and purified from every unhallowed mixture. The Spirit of God who fostered it in the soul of the pious psalmist, has caused it to be recorded here, as a test of character and a model for imitation to all who read the sacred volume. If one were required to give a definition of genuine piety, so comprehensive as to extend to all persons, under all circumstances, in all ages, and so discriminating as to distinguish it from every counterfeit, I know not how it could be better done, than by saying, "It is the tendency of the soul towards God; it is the aspiration of the immortal spirit after the great Father of spirits, in a desire to know him and to be like him." The fervor of this desire, in the soul of the pious psalmist, is compared in the text to the thirst of the hart chased in sultry weather over the dusty plains. In another beautiful psalm, the same devout aspirations of the pious soul are thus expressed: "O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee; my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee, in a dry and thirsty land where no water is; to see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary. Because thy loving kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee." A knowledge of God and a con-

formity to him is the sum of all that is required by the precepts of revelation; it is the attainment we are urged to seek by all its motives, and encouraged to hope for, in all its promises. The desire of this is the first principle, the very essence of all true religion, as it glowed in the heart of him whose meat and drink it was, to do the will of his Father and to finish his work; and as it is experienced in humbler measure, by the feeblest of his followers. In proportion as this desire is pure, ardent, and constant, piety is genuine and fervent. All the forms of worship are valuable, so far as they cherish this; all the means of grace are successful in proportion as they render it lively, active, efficient, and habitual; an inextinguishable thirst to know more of God and to be more like him is characteristic alike of grace on earth and glory in Heaven. It animates the seraph before the throne, the spirits of the just made perfect, and every child of God now journeying through this wilderness to his Father's house on high.

Grant me your attention while I attempt to show how this desire is implanted and cherished in the heart of man; to illustrate its excellence, and to make a practical improvement of the whole.

I. How is a desire to know God and to be like him implanted and cherished in the heart of man? Man was made upright; in the image of God created he man. Before sin had darkened his understanding, corrupted his affections, or loaded his conscience with a sense of guilt, no doubt the spontaneous and habitual tendency of his soul was towards God; his intellectual powers found their noble and delightful employment in tracing the perfections of his Creator as they shone in every part of his works, then fresh from his forming hand, and every perception of his glory awakened in his heart, new emotions of veneration and love, and

new aspirations after a perfect conformity to his will. But man being in honor abode not. By transgression he fell from the state in which he was created, and lost the knowledge, the love, and the moral image of God. In this fallen state, there was in man no tendency to return to the knowledge and the love of his Creator. Every bias of his soul lay in an opposite direction, and although he retained all his desire of happiness and his dread of misery, and must at every step of his departure have felt more keenly the bitter consequences of his apostasy, yet the current of depravity would have borne him for ever away from light, and hope, and joy, into the regions of darkness, and despair, and death, if Sovereign mercy had not stretched out her arm to rescue him from perdition, and restored him to the knowledge and the likeness of God. Even if the darkness of his understanding and the depravity of his heart, brought on him by the fall, had not shut him out from knowing and loving his Creator, how could the offended majesty and justice of the Eternal Sovereign of the universe, look with complacency on a being loaded with the guilt of multiplied and aggravated transgressions?—or how could man, conscious of his guilt and vileness, contemplate the infinite perfections of his holy Sovereign and Judge, without feeling the terrors of the Almighty fall upon him, and flying if possible from that Being whose glorious attributes stand arrayed in irreconcilable and everlasting opposition to sin? Lost indeed was our condition, and so lost, that nothing less than Divine wisdom could have devised, and Divine power and love have provided a remedy. "But God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish but have everlasting life." In accordance with the councils of everlasting love, the Son of God

hath become the Mediator between God and man, by whom we may come into the presence of our offended Sovereign with a well founded hope of acceptance, and even look up to him with joy as our reconciled God and Father. Coming out from the bosom of the Father, resplendent with the brightness of his glory, he assumed a soul and a body like our own, and thus uniting in his person the Divine nature with the human, he is God manifest in the flesh. In him the attributes of Jehovah are embodied, are brought down to the level of our perception, and presented to us in a manner so distinct and palpable, and exhibited with such attractive loveliness and compassion, with such sweetly blended majesty and condescension, as gives us every possible advantage for coming to the knowledge of God in Christ. At the same time, having assumed our nature, he hath voluntarily taken our low place, and through the Eternal Spirit offered himself a sacrifice without spot unto God, to expiate our guilt, and declare the righteousness of God, that he might be just, and yet the justified of every one that believeth in Jesus; and having thus provided for the pardon of our guilt by his death upon the cross, he hath, by his word, taught us the will of God concerning our duty and destiny; and, by the promise of the Spirit to create us anew unto righteousness and true holiness, he hath provided for subduing our love of sin, and our disrelish for holy employments and enjoyments, and filling our hearts anew with love to God and delight in his service. Thus he is to sinners the way, the truth, and the life, by which they come to God, to know him and to desire and seek conformity to him. By him and in him, they attain that knowledge of the only true God, which is everlasting life. Beholding, by the illumination of the Spirit of truth, the glory of God, as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ, they

are transformed into the same image from glory to glory. All true piety, all genuine devotion in fallen man, has a near and intimate connexion with the Lord Jesus, and is dependent on him. It is by his mediation, that the devout soul aspires towards the blessed God; it thirsts for fuller and clearer discoveries of his glories, as they shine with a mild effulgence in the person of his incarnate Son; it longs to attain that conformity to him of which it sees in Jesus Christ the perfect model. Thus it is by the grace of Christ, that the sinner sees all the obstacles which his blindness, his guilt, and his depravity had raised to shut him out from God, taken away, and a fervent desire to know God, and to be like him, implanted and cherished in his heart.

II. Let us now consider the excellence of this panting of the soul after God, this vital principle of all genuine piety.

In illustration of this, I remark first, it is a most ennobling principle; it elevates and purifies the soul, and produces in the character all that is lovely and of good report. An ardent thirst for useful knowledge is justly esteemed a noble trait of character. Such knowledge is the food of the mind, by which its faculties are invigorated, the sphere of its observation and its operations enlarged, its sentiments are made liberal and generous, and all its powers nurtured. Such is the native tendency of the acquisition of knowledge in proportion to the excellence of its objects, and of the purposes to which it is applied. What then must be the tendency of an inextinguishable thirst after the knowledge of the all perfect and ever blessed God; and this, in order to imitate his imitable perfections, and grow up into his likeness! How powerfully must the contemplation of infinite excellence, tend to expand and invigorate the intellect, to purify and elevate the

affections, to cherish in the soul every generous and noble sentiment, and to purge it from every sordid and selfish passion, and redeem it from the power of every degrading and unworthy principle and motive! When we see a youth diligently studying the recorded actions and expressions of those great and good men whom history presents as the benefactors of their species and blessings to society, and animated by an ardent desire to emulate their virtues, we esteem this a most auspicious omen of future usefulness, excellence, and happiness; and unless some disastrous influence blights these buds of promise, we are not disappointed. Excellence of every kind assimilates the mind that sees and loves it to itself. How ennobling, then, must be the desire to know the blessed God, as he is manifest in Christ Jesus; and to imitate his perfections, as they shone in him who went about doing good? How must the character of the pious man rise and brighten in the view of all superior intelligence, at each successful effort to know more of God, and to be more like him? While the spirit of true devotion glows in his bosom, how does it raise him above the pollution and ruin of this fallen world, and conduct him upward and onward towards those bright abodes into which Heaven is gathering all that is pure and lovely in the universe! Oh! my brethren, there is, in the sentiments and the aims of true piety, even in the humblest followers of Jesus, a real sublimity and elevation, a genuine dignity and excellence, that outshines all that has been nurtured by earthly principles, in those whom men have applauded and admired as the great and good; as such, God honors it, and will honor it, before an assembled universe, with the cordial approbation of all holy beings.

2d. I remark in illustration of the excellence of this tendency of the devout soul towards God, that it is a

most *active* principle. All our activity is prompted by the desire of attaining some object, which we place before our minds as the reward of our exertions. If the prospect of ultimately reaching the point at which we aim be equally fair, those efforts will be strenuous and incessant, in proportion to what is felt to be our present distance from it, and the amount of exertion requisite to reach it. If the mind feels secure of success in its pursuits with very little effort, it will be comparatively sluggish and inactive. If, on the contrary, it beholds the objects of its desires rising far above it, and is conscious that it can hope to succeed in reaching it only by tasking its powers to the utmost, and that success will amply compensate every effort, it will make corresponding exertions, unless it is discouraged by the remote prospect of success, and its energies are paralysed by despair. Apply these remarks to the subject before us. The object of the devout soul is to attain the knowledge and the likeness of the blessed God. From a world groaning under the ruins of the apostasy, where darkness, and pollution, and misery prevail, and death reigns and triumphs over every living thing, the child of God looks up to that glorious Being whose essence pervades the universe, and whose perfections and blessedness are immense, unchanging, and eternal, and he longs and labors to know and resemble him. He aspires after an unclouded vision of his glories and a perfect conformity to his excellence and blessedness. In aiming at attainments so sublime, he knows that he does not lie open to the charge of folly or presumption, for he beholds God manifest in Christ Jesus, reconciling the world unto himself for the express purpose of raising men to his own knowledge and likeness. He is assured that he who spared not his own Son, but delivered him *up for* us all, will also with him freely give us all things.

He has the promise of the Spirit to strengthen him with all might in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in his heart by faith, that being rooted and grounded in love, he may know the love of God which passeth knowledge, and be filled with all the fulness of God. He has given to him exceeding great and precious promises, that by those he might be made a partaker of the Divine nature. He is animated by the example of a great multitude who have gone before him, esteeming God's favor life, and his loving-kindness better than life, and who have already attained the end of their faith, in the immediate presence, the perfect likeness, and full fruition of him they loved. In their circumstances, how many and powerful are the motives which urge him to lay aside every weight and the sin that doth most easily beset him, and to run with patience the race set before him. How can he do otherwise than, forgetting the things that are behind, and reaching forth unto those which are before, press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Surely he will give all diligence to add to his faith virtue, and knowledge, and temperance, and patience, and brotherly kindness, and charity, that he may make his calling and election sure, and have ministered unto him an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of his Lord and Redeemer.

3d. This is a permanent and unfailing principle. The principles which animate and sustain the men of the world in their pursuits are mutable and transient as the fashion of this world which passeth away. Pleasures, riches, honors, all the objects of earthly ambition, glide rapidly beyond the reach of their most ardent and successful votaries. How wretched their condition who have given their hearts to these, when the finger of death closes all the avenues by which they have held

communion with them, and the passions they have nurtured, shut out from every gratification, are left to prey upon the mind itself. But where the reigning principle of the soul is a desire to know and to resemble the blessed God, the way is open not only for permanent felicity, but for boundless and endless expansion and improvement. Each changing scene of his earthly pilgrimage affords the devout man opportunity of growing in the knowledge and the likeness of God, and the touch of death at which his material frame returns to its native dust, does but release his Spirit from every clog, that she may rise unincumbered to see him as he is and know even as she is known. Who may describe the emotions of the devout soul when every interposing veil which separated her from the object of her affections is for ever withdrawn, and bearing his perfect image, she draws nigh to God, and while all her expanding powers are filled with his fulness, beholds rising and brightening before her an endless career of ever increasing knowledge, holiness, and joy. Surely they are blessed whose desire is towards God; who long to know and love and be like him; who can adopt the language of the psalmist: "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God."

From this subject we may learn what is not, and what is, genuine piety. It is not a round of religious duties however exact, nor is it zeal for any system of religious doctrines however correct, nor is it any excitement of the passions however rapturous or strong, nor even the most exemplary obedience to the dictates of justice and mercy in our intercourse with our fellow men; all these are indeed more or less intimately connected with it, but they are connected with it as the stream with its fountain; as the fruit with the tree on

which it grows; as the language of sincerity with the purpose and emotions which it expresses; as effects in the moral system with their causes. Piety is but another term for godliness; the habitual fervent aspiration of the devout soul after the knowledge of the blessed God, and a conformity to his will. It has its seat in a mind enlightened by the Holy Ghost; it is a spiritual discernment of his transcendent glory and excellence as they are manifest in Jesus Christ, and a heart renewed by the same blessed agent, to find its joy in his service, and to esteem his favor life and his loving kindness better than life. It is sustained and animated by those manifestations of himself which God makes to such a soul while it waits upon him, and by the exceeding great and precious promises of his word. The man of genuine piety loves his closet and the sanctuary, and the fellowship of the saints, and all the means of grace; because in these God has promised to meet with his people and grant them communion with himself; and they are all so many avenues by which they draw nigh to God. He is zealous for the truth, because in this he sees the lineaments of the Divine character, and by it he is transformed into the Divine likeness. He mourns over his sins with ingenuous sorrow because they are odious in the sight of God, and disqualify him for his service and the enjoyment of communion with him; he diligently discharges every duty to his fellow men, because this is acceptable in the sight of God, and he is merciful as his Father in Heaven is merciful, forbearing and forgiving in meekness and love, even as God for Christ's sake forgiveth him.

We may see in this subject that grace and glory are intimately connected, and that as a life of piety is a necessary preparation for the holy happiness of Heaven, so that happiness is the natural consummation of such

a life. The joy of the just made perfect springs essentially from the knowledge of God and their delight in his service. It is his presence, and the unclouded manifestation of his glory that fills Heaven with holy joy and wonder. The object of desire, the source of joy to the child of God in this world, are precisely the same. The difference between him and his brethren who are made perfect in their Father's house, consists not so much in the nature of those devout breathings of the soul which are common to both, as in their comparative fervor and constancy; and as he grows in grace he approaches nearer and nearer to them. There are in these psalms strains of devotion that bear no unhappy resemblance to the songs of the ransomed of the Lord in the Heavenly Zion, and the brightest passages in the believer's earthly pilgrimage, and the holiest emotions of his soul, are near akin to those of his brethren in the skies. They are indeed as the first fruits to the full harvest, as the earnest of the inheritance to its complete possession, as the fore-taste to the eternal banquet. The same sun sheds light and joy upon both, though to the one his beams are like the dawning morn, while on the other they pour cloudless and endless day; and as we can scarcely discern a difference between the light of the rising sun, and that of the same glorious luminary when fully risen, so the closing scene of the believer's earthly pilgrimage is often gilded with celestial radiance, and the transition is brief and easy.

SERMON XXI.

THE FAITH OF THE GOSPEL A MISSIONARY PRINCIPLE.

"We also believe, and therefore speak."—2 Cor. iv. 13.

THE missionary zeal of the primitive Christians was not romantic or extravagant; it did not owe its origin or its support to their peculiar circumstances; it had no necessary connexion with those miracles by which, at its promulgation, the Gospel received the seal and stamp of Divine authority.

In all their efforts to publish the Gospel, they did but exemplify the truths which were spirit and life to their own souls. "They believed, and therefore spake." This is the simple explanation of that devotion to the cause of missions which cheerfully forsook ease, wealth, kindred, reputation, for the promotion of that cause; counted life itself cheap in comparison with it. They were missionaries because they were Christians.

In the *context* Paul speaks of his toils, self-denials, and sufferings, in the prosecution of his work as a missionary to the heathen. In the *text* he tells us why he thus toiled, and denied himself, and suffered. It was because he believed the Gospel he published; his own soul rested for salvation on that Saviour whose power and grace he made known to others; his missionary zeal was an essential element of his spiritual life; it was identified with his very being as a sinner pardoned and regenerated by the grace of Christ. To believe with the heart unto righteousness, and with the tongue

to testify of Jesus and salvation to the perishing, seemed to him to be so related that one could not exist in the absence of the other. He was a missionary just because he was a Christian. He believed, and therefore spake.

Have we received the same Gospel? Do we build on the same foundation our hopes of eternal life? That Gospel is missionary in its principles, in its spirit, and in its object. That faith will not suffer us to be silent; if we believe we shall therefore speak.

Let us consider this topic—The missionary character of saving faith; or, the faith of the Gospel a missionary principle.

Look, in illustration of it, at the great objects of faith, the truths believed.

God, the eternal, uncreated fountain of being and blessedness, infinite and unchangeable, supreme in power, in wisdom, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth!

Man, made in the image of God, endowed with capacities to know him, to love him, to obey him, to enjoy his favor, to show forth his praise, and under his approving smile make everlasting advances in knowledge, holiness, and bliss; but fallen from his high estate, an alien from his Maker's love, an outcast from his fellowship! under the curse of a broken law! under the bondage of selfish passions and appetites; dark, guilty, depraved, polluted, wretched; filling up with sins and sorrows a brief term of probation, and hastening to the grave—and the untried scenes that lie beyond the grave—with no fitness for Heaven, and no hope of a blessed immortality!

Redemption from the ruins of his apostasy, provided at an infinite expense by the boundless compassion of God, the Eternal Father not sparing his own Son, but delivering him up for us all. The Eternal Son assuming our nature, bearing our sins in his own body on the

cross, rising from the dead to give assurance of his power to save, and able to save to the uttermost all them that came unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them!

The Eternal Spirit bearing his appropriate part in this work of mercy, accompanying the *Gospel* with his life-giving power, renewing the pardoned sinner after the image of Christ, and educating him for the service of God on earth, and the holy joys of his presence in eternity!

These are the great outlines of that Gospel which the Christian believes, and on which he relies, as the hope of his soul!

Under this economy of mercy God has put a fallen world; its provisions are ample for the salvation of all men; none are excluded from its invitations; its calls are to men of every clime, and age, and character, for there is no difference; all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; and the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.

This Gospel so necessary for all men, so adapted to the condition of all men, so ample for the salvation of all men, he has committed to his people, not for themselves only, but as trustees for their perishing brethren, with his express command, "Go ye into all the world, and publish the good news to every creature;" and his promise, "Lo! I am with you always."

That sinful men may partake of this redemption wrought out for them at such expense, they must call upon the name of the Lord; and "whosoever shall call upon him shall be saved;" but how shall they call upon him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how

shall they preach except they be sent (literally, *missionaries*) ?

By the agency of men must this redemption be imparted to their fellow men. God has appointed no other means to make it known than the prayers and the efforts of his people. "Ye are the light of the *world*, ye are the salt of the *earth*." Pardoned sinners are the selected almoners of Divine mercy to their fellow sinners; freely they have received, freely must they give; the hopes of a world are suspended on their fidelity and diligence; every one of them partakes in this fearful responsibility; from this high privilege not one is excluded; and the time for action is short. Soon the lips that should tell of the love of Christ will be silent, and the ears that should listen to the glad tidings senseless and cold; and the hand that should minister to the perishing powerless and motionless. Whatever the Christian would do for the glory of his Redeemer in the salvation of his fellow men must be quickly done. To the grave, to the bar of the Supreme Judge, to the retributions of eternity, he and all his contemporaries are passing rapidly away; each year as it passes bears with it to eternity 25,000,000 out of the unevangelized world.

Now I ask, can a man believe these things and not speak of them? Will not every feeling of common humanity impel him to publish them? Can he withhold from his fellow men information so vital to their happiness? When he looks abroad on a world perishing in ignorance and sin, will he dare to suppress such a message from Heaven! When he hears the command of Christ, "Go preach my Gospel to every creature; freely ye have received, freely give," can he be silent? How can he hope for any part in this salvation for himself, while he disobeys the command of God to make it

known? How dare he celebrate the death of Christ at his table, if he is not doing what he can to publish it to every creature? Surely if we believe we shall therefore speak; if we are Christians we shall be missionaries! Is it not so?

But the faith of the Gospel is not merely an intelligent conviction of these truths; nor is it simply a speculative assent to them.

It is more, far more; with the *heart* man believeth unto righteousness. The believer apprehends the objects of faith *in their importance and excellence* as well as in their truth, and he evidently receives and approves them *in their application to himself and to others*, and, therefore, his faith is a missionary principle. If he *thus* believes he must speak.

It is the definition of faith that to the truths believed it gives a substantial and a present reality. To the believer they are not matters of speculation, they are not a theory, abstract and cold, however sublime and beautiful; nay, they are facts, palpable and weighty; they are realities, living and powerful; they take hold of his affections; they move him and govern him as principles of action. The glory of God, the original dignity and the present degradation and ruin of man, redemption by the expiatory death of the Son of God, applied by the power of the Holy Ghost, received by a cordial trust in the Redeemer, the power and glory of Christ, the worth of the soul, the evil of sin, salvation or perdition awaiting each individual reception or rejection of the Saviour, human agency as real, as important in these momentous interests as in the every day transactions of the life that now is, his own obligation and responsibility thus connected with the destiny of his fellow men, interwoven and inseparably bound up with their everlasting happiness or misery, as God has com-

mitted to him a message pregnant with their salvation or perdition,—these weighty and solemn truths the believer beholds and receives as substantial and present realities; he feels their power in their application to himself; he hides them in his heart; they are his principles of action, the living spring of his emotions, the foundation of his hopes; in their light he sees the life that now is, and the life that is to come; he looks abroad upon the world; he looks upward to his God and Saviour; he looks onward to the last judgment, and to the joys and sorrows of eternity. Thus his faith is the substance of things hoped for, the demonstration of things not seen.

Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. If these things fill the mind and heart of the believer, can he forbear to speak of them to others? Can he hold them in unrighteousness, and not publish them to his fellow men! How insignificant are all the earthly fortunes of men compared with their ruin by sin, and their redemption by the blood of Christ! How vain all the joys and sorrows of the present life compared with the bliss or the anguish of eternity! Of how little importance any influence or agency of the believer that terminates on the shadows of earth and time, compared with the diffusion of that knowledge of Christ by which souls are rescued from the eternal bondage of sin, and made heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ! How can the believer hesitate to make any sacrifice of ease, or wealth, or earthly reputation, that the Gospel may be published to those who have not heard the glad tidings, when he realizes the worth of the soul, the price paid for its redemption, and the blessedness and glory that await the ransomed sinner in eternity! How can he prefer his own ease, or wealth, or reputation, to the

eternal welfare of his fellow men, and the glory of Christ in their salvation!

All the great objects of faith are so many motives to missionary efforts, motives of surpassing weight and power; and in proportion as the believer apprehends them in their majesty and excellence, and appreciates their bearings and relations, he feels that he must make them known to others, that he must publish them, so far as in him lies, to all! He believes, and therefore speaks. He is a missionary in spirit, and effort, and prayer, because he is a Christian.

And this objective power of faith, as a missionary principle, coincides with the relations to the Saviour and to his fellow men, into which the believer is brought by faith, and the influence faith exerts on his character. Receiving Christ as his Saviour, relying on him for salvation, he becomes identified with the interests and the power of Christ; he lives no longer to himself, but to him that died for him and rose again. The Spirit of Christ dwells in him; the love of Christ constrains him; he receives of Christ's fulness; for him to live is Christ. By faith he is brought into intimate union and sympathy with Christ in those views, and feelings, and purposes, which led him when he was rich for our sakes to become poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich, and for which he endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of God.

Was Christ a missionary? Did he come from Heaven to earth on an errand of love? Did he made infinite sacrifice that he might preach the Gospel to the poor, and submit to infinite self-denial and suffering for the salvation of the lost? The believer, in proportion as his faith is genuine and vigorous, has the same mind that was in Christ, and walks as Christ also walked.

When he tastes the joy of pardoned sin, and feels the tie of grateful love that binds his obedient heart to him who has redeemed him by his blood, no impulse is more powerful and universal than that which prompts him to exclaim—

> "Oh, that all might believe,
> And salvation receive,
> And their hope and their joy
> Be the same."

His faith worketh by love; love to his Saviour, in whom, though now he sees him not, yet believing he rejoices with joy unspeakable and full of glory; love to souls for whom Christ died; love to that cause for which Christ rose, and ever lives to intercede; love to that kingdom over which Christ reigns, and with whose prosperity and ultimate universal triumph the honor, the glory of God in the whole work of the redemption, and the temporal and eternal happiness of men are for ever bound up and identified.

Such is the subjective power of faith over the heart and life; and can he, who thus with the heart believes unto righteousness, fail to speak of Jesus and salvation to his fellow men! Can he thus rob Christ of his glory, and them of that salvation Christ purchased with his blood! Nay, if such should keep silent, methinks the very stones would cry out. If we believe, we shall therefore speak; if we are Christians, we shall be missionaries! Is it not so? I speak as unto wise men; judge ye what I say. Thus faith wrought in those who saw the glory of Christ when he dwelt among men:— In Andrew, who, when he listened to his word, sought his own brother Simon and said, "We have found the Christ;" in the woman of Samaria, to whom he had no sooner revealed himself at Jacob's well, than, leaving

there her watering pot she went away into the city and said, "Come see a man that told me all things that ever I did; is not this the Christ?" in the deaf, and dumb, and blind, who, when he had healed them, the more he charged them not to make him known—so much the more a great deal did they publish his power and grace.

Thus, pre-eminently, faith wrought in the primitive church, after that Jesus, having commanded them to go into all the world and publish his Gospel to every creature, had ascended to Heaven, and they had received the promise of the Father, the baptism of the Holy Ghost, when Peter and John replied to the great council of the nation, straightly threatening them, and commanding them to speak no more in his name: "We cannot but speak the things we have seen and heard;" and when, afterwards, they had been beaten, and the command repeated, they rejoiced that they were counted worth to suffer shame for his name, and daily in the temple and in every house ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus Christ; when by persecution scattered abroad, the disciples went everywhere preaching the word. Saul of Tarsus had no sooner received forgiveness than straightway in the synagogues he preached Christ that he is the Son of God; from the church in Thessalonica, feeble and suffering persecution, the word of the Lord sounded out through Macedonia and Achaia, and the region round about; and Christians at Philippi shone as a light in the world, holding forth the word of life; and each church, planted amid the wastes of superstition and idolatry, was a fountain of living water, gushing out in the desert, causing the wilderness and the solitary place to be glad, and the desert to rejoice and blossom as the rose. Thus it will be again if the spirit of primitive piety returns once more to the church, and a new Pentecost shall bring with it, upon

ministers and Christians, another baptism of the Holy Ghost and of fire.

Thus faith wrought as a missionary principle in primitive Christians; does it thus work in us? They believed and therefore spake! We believe the same truths, and with the heart unto salvation—such is our profession—do we therefore speak? Here is a test of character; here a criterion of the genuineness of faith, a measure of its strength. So much as there is of the spirit and the work of missions in a denomination of Christians, in a single church, in a Christian family, in an individual believer, so much is there of that living faith which unites the soul to Christ, and receives eternal life as the gift of God in him. If our faith does not impel us to prayer and effort for the diffusion of the Gospel where Christ is not known, assuredly we have embraced another gospel than that in which primitive believers rejoiced, or we hold the truth in unrighteousness, and have need that one teach us again which be the first principles.

See what is needed to call forth the resources of the church for the publication of the Gospel through the world. There is no lack of motives to enlist in this work the hearts and hands of all who love the Saviour, and to hold them to it in an earnest, persevering determination that the utmost power of prayer and effort shall be put forth to publish salvation in every language and to every family on earth, ere the present generation passes into eternity. The Providence of God has removed obstacles, broken down opposition, multiplied means and facilities, so that an open door is set before us to publish the glad tidings to the ends of the earth. In many lands the Holy Spirit seems to have anticipated our obedience to the commands of Christ, waking up expectation of change and inquiry after truth

among nations spell-bound for ages. What then is wanting? Faith! faith! But alas! shall our unbelief render commands and promises of none effect? shall it harden the hearts of Christians against the love of Christ, who laid down his life for the world's redemption? Do we believe that the heathen are perishing? that beside the name of Jesus there is no other under Heaven, given unto men, whereby a sinner can be saved; that his Gospel, attended by the Holy Ghost, is the power of God unto salvation everywhere and always; and do we believe that nothing is now wanting but the prayers and efforts of those who love the Gospel, so to spread and multiply its triumphs, that wherever sin now reigneth unto death, grace shall reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our lord. Do you thus believe? Then speak.

SERMON XXII.

THE MISSIONARY SPIRIT.

"None of us liveth unto himself."—Romans xiv. 7.

Selfishness reigns in our fallen world. Unrenewed men seek their own; they live unto themselves, not for the good of their fellow men. To this supreme selfishness, Christianity is the perfect counterpart. Its motto is glory to God in the highest, good will towards men; its first lesson, *deny thyself;* its general object to write upon every heart the law of love. In its great Author it exhibits the perfect model of self-denying love; it enjoins sympathy with him, and a willing conformity to his example as the test of our interest in him, and the expression of our gratitude for his love to us. "If any man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of his."

With supreme selfishness the gospel makes no terms; it admits no compromise; it requires for God the whole heart, the whole man. And this not for a season only, but for ever; not merely in sentiment and theory, but to be embodied and set forth in our daily plans, aims, and actions: "Ye are not your own; ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your bodies and with your spirits which are his." "None of us," saith the apostle, "liveth to himself; for whether we live we live unto the Lord, or whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether therefore we live or die we are the Lord's."

On the other hand, he whose supreme desire and ruling purpose it is, to please and honor Christ, who

forms his plans, shapes his pursuits, governs his own spirit, and regulates all his concerns, in subordination to this as the great end of life, liveth not unto himself. Whatever may be his situation, whether the means he possesses or the influence he exerts, are great or small, he liveth unto the Lord; he hath the mind of Christ; Christ is in him, the hope of glory; and when Christ who is his life shall appear, then shall he also appear with him in glory.

See here, my brethren, the principle which divides the world into two parties. Behold the separating line on whose opposite sides men now stand, and will stand at the judgment seat of Christ. Mark the grand distinction which will endure, when death's cold wave obliterates all the titles men have written on the sands of time—the unerring test by which each of you may know to-day whether you are righteous or wicked, a friend or an enemy of God, an heir of Heaven, or a son of perdition. The question is not whether you profess religion, whether you stand fair among your fellows, whether your way seemeth right in your own eyes; but the question is, what do you aim at? What object do you habitually pursue? What is, day by day, your ruling purpose? Do you live unto yourself? Then you cannot be a Christian; for no Christian liveth to himself. Do you deny yourself, and live unto him who died for you and rose again? Do you desire to please him and seek to honor him as the great business of life? This is Christianity, and you are a Christian, a child of God, an heir of glory!

Admit now, that it is your deliberate choice, and your fixed intelligent purpose, to live unto the Lord: let us examine the practical operation of this principle: what will be its influence on your conduct?—how will you act it out from day to day?

No doubt you will walk in Christ's steps; you will imitate Christ's example; you will labor, and pray, and deny yourself to promote the same ends for which Christ laid aside his glory, endured the contradiction of sinners, toiled and laid down his life.

But he came into the world to seek and to save the lost! He was lifted up on the cross that he might draw all men unto him. The great object for which he lived, what was it? The glory of God in the salvation of men. And this he sought by what means?—By the influence of a holy example, by unwearied diligence in making known the Gospel, and by fervent, unceasing prayer.

Here, then, is the end for which you will live; here the work in which you will labor if you live unto Christ, that you may promote the glory of God in the present and eternal good of your fellow men! And here are the specific means by which you will seek to accomplish this great end for which you live, by diffusing around you the light and power of a holy example, by diligent self-denying efforts to make known the saving truths of the Gospel to those who know them not, and by fervent prayer for the abundant influences of the Holy Spirit, to make the Gospel the power of God unto salvation.

This object you will place distinctly before your mind, and hold it there as the mark at which you aim; in your closet, in your family, in the social circle, in your daily business, in every sphere of duty or privilege where the Lord calls you to serve him, you will plan and labor for this end, just as the covetous man plans and toils for wealth, the ambitious man for power and honor, the votary of pleasure for sensual indulgence, the student for literary fame, or the worldly-minded physician or lawyer for professional eminence and emolument. So

if you live unto the Lord you will do all you can that the Gospel of Christ may be made known to all men as speedily as possible, and everywhere may be the power of God and the wisdom of God unto salvation.

This great principle will lead you to prayer, effort, and self-denial, that you may be holy in all manner of conversation, being filled with the Spirit of Christ, having his word dwelling in you richly in all wisdom, that you may be furnished to every good work, let your light shine, and be an epistle of Christ, known and read of all men.

Then it will lead you to labor and pray, first for the salvation of your children and the members of your own family, over whom God has given you an influence he has given to no one else, and whose eternal happiness depends more upon your agency than on that of any other person.

Then it will lead you to seek the holiness, usefulness, and comfort of believers, and the salvation of sinners all around you, as far as you can exert a direct personal influence. It will prompt to personal effort for the salvation of men in the Sabbath School, the tract distribution, and by faithful, affectionate exhortation to neighbors and friends.

But is this all? Will your love to him who redeemed you with his own blood, and your sympathy with him in his zeal for God, and his compassion for dying men —will they allow you to stop here? Will they not bear you forth in your desires, and prayers, and efforts, beyond your own family, or neighborhood, or country? You look upon men everywhere as your brethren, partakers of the same nature, involved in the same sad and guilty apostasy from God, heirs of the same immortal being, passing on with you to the judgment seat of the holy God, and the righteous retributions of eter-

nity. You look abroad, and behold the whole world lying in wickedness: its apostate population groaning beneath the curse, living and dying under the weighty power of superstition, error, and sin. You know that Jesus Christ is able and willing to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by him; and that there is no salvation in any other. You know that he has commanded his people to publish his gospel to every creature, and promised in this work to be with them always, and, by pouring out his Spirit upon all flesh, to restore the ruins of the fall, and make the wilderness as Eden, and the desert as the garden of the Lord! Surely then, if you have the Spirit of Christ, if you live unto him who died for you, you will labor for the salvation of men everywhere.

"We believe," said the apostle, "and therefore speak;" and he who believes these weighty, soul-stirring truths must speak; he cannot keep silent. Your zeal and compassion will not be confined by any limits less extensive than the ravages of sin; nor will your benevolence be more circumscribed than the provisions and promises of the gospel. You will live for the conversion of the world. You will do all you can to send the gospel, as soon as possible, to every creature; and that it may go everywhere in the demonstration of the spirit and of power. Nor will you cease from solicitude, prayer, and effort, while there remains one dark region of the globe unblessed by the light of life, or one barbarous tongue in which the story of redeeming love has not been told, or one habitation of man from which no song of praise to the Lamb that was slain has ever gone up to Heaven.

It may be your duty to leave all that is familiar and precious in your native land, and go forth in person, to tell of Jesus and salvation through his blood to besotted

and perishing idolaters. If so, this principle will constrain you, as it did the followers of Christ in primitive times, to leave all at his command, and for his name's sake to go forth among the Gentiles, not counting your life dear unto yourself, if you may finish your course with joy.

But if you are not called thus to consecrate yourself to the toils and perils of a foreign mission, you will not on that account be less truly or less earnestly engaged in laboring for the world's conversion. The spirit of missions is one and the same in the messengers who go out, and in the churches that send them forth, and by whose prayers and contributions they are sustained. There is as fair an opportunity and as urgent a call to live unto Christ for the world's conversion, in the churches at home, as in the missionary stations among the heathen. Self-denial and sacrifices for this object are as truly needed, on our part, as on that of our brethren. Nay, at this time, the most obvious defect in the whole system of means, for spreading the gospel through the world, is in the churches at home. Here is the point of severe pressure at this hour. The work abroad languishes because Christians at home do not sustain it by their contributions and their prayers. Laborers who are ready to go, and whose services seem indispensable in fields white to the harvest, are now detained; and it is necessary to curtail the means of usefulness of those already abroad, and to leave ungathered the ripened fruits of past labors, for want of funds.

And who can say how far the worldliness, and contention, and restraining of prayer for this cause, so prevalent in the churches, shuts the windows of Heaven, and prevents those showers of blessing, which, if we did but ask for them in a true missionary spirit, would de-

scend upon the desert and the solitary place, caus
them to bud and blossom as the rose.

We cannot expect great prosperity at our missio
abroad, until there is far more of self-denying love an
prayerful zeal in the churches at home. For it is th
purpose of Christ not merely to save the world by th
agency of his people, but to do it in such a way as shal
most signally purify and bless his church. He ha
made redeemed sinners the almoners of his saving
mercy to their fellow sinners, that he may thus draw
them into more intimate union and communion with
himself, teach them to enter into his plans, to sympa-
thize in his purposes, to breathe his Spirit, and to walk
in his footsteps, till they are made perfect in his like-
ness, and meet to dwell in his presence, to behold and
share his glory, and show forth his praise. For this
reason his revealed plan calls for all the energies of his
people in this work. He has something for every one
to do. He invites the feeblest and humblest of those
whom he has redeemed with his blood, and made them
kings and priests unto God, to be co-workers with him
in this enterprise, which involves the glory of God, the
best interest of the universe, and the consummation of
the purposes of everlasting love and mercy.

Yes, fellow disciple, you may live unto him who died
for you, in helping on the very work for which he died,
however humble your powers, or the sphere in which
you move. For the world's conversion you may labor
acceptably and usefully every day in your closet, and
in your family, in the circle of your acquaintances and
friends, and in the diligent pursuit of your lawful
calling, be it in the counting-house, or the market, or
the work-shop, or on your farm, or in the domestic cir-
cle, or while you ply your needle or your pen. Your

influence may be felt like the dew of Heaven, among the millions of idolatrous Asia, or the benighted tribes of dark and deeply injured Africa, or the far distant isles of the sea. Your circumstances cannot excuse you from bearing a part in the blessed work. I know an aged widow in humble circumstances, whose health is infirm, a member of one of the largest churches, who does more, and has done more for years, than any other member in the same church.

God will hear you when, like Simeon or Anna of old, you wait for the consolation of Israel, pouring out your heart unto him in unceasing prayer. He will accept you, when you consecrate to him, for the promotion of his cause, the fruits of diligence, economy, and self-denial. He will smile upon you, when with a heart full of love to him, and faith in his promises, you lay upon his altar your gift, the fruit and expression of that love, though it be small. He will bless you when, sweetly constrained by his love in redeeming your soul from death, your eyes from tears, and your feet from falling, you write upon your time, your talents, your property, your influence, all that he has intrusted to you: "Holiness to Jehovah! dedicated to him who redeemed me by his blood, for the honor of his name, in the salvation of the world!"

In many instances, in our own day, the spirit of missions has shone as brightly in those who have lived unto Christ for this work at home, as in those who have toiled and died among the heathen. The names of Goodell, and Bissel, and Evarts stand registered on high, with those of Hall, and Martyn, and Fisk, as servants of Christ and benefactors of mankind. And when the world's redemption is complete, and the purposes of Divine mercy are consummated, they will rejoice together in the blessed result; and sweetly

mingle their thanksgiving to him who permitted them to be fellow laborers in it. And the hour which shall witness the full power and prevalence of the missionary spirit in the church at home will not long precede those predicted triumphs of redeeming love that usher in the grand jubilee of the universe.

From this subject we learn, first, the spirit of missions is the genius of Christianity. It is not something in its nature rare and extraordinary, having an arbitrary and incidental connexion with true piety, or created and cherished in the hearts of a few, by some uncommon operation of the Holy Ghost. No, my brethren; it is the genuine impression of those great truths which the Spirit of God always employs when he renews a sinner after the image of Christ; the proper fruit of those Divine influences without which no man ever called Jesus the Lord, in sincerity and truth; the spontaneous expression of that unreserved submission to Christ, and that affectionate self-consecration to him, which denote a sinner's acceptance of redemption through his blood; the first fruits of that holy love in which the justified believer begins to sympathize with that loving Saviour who is his life. Zeal for the honor of God, and compassion for the souls of men, dwell in that heart on which the Holy Ghost hath written in living characters the great law of love. And if they are not perverted by error, or chilled by covetousness, or paralysed by sloth and unbelief, they will go forth to save that which is lost; they will respond to the command, "Go preach the gospel to every creature," in prayers, and efforts, and sacrifices, to publish far and wide the glad tidings of great joy. Never did a pardoned sinner so taste the joys of salvation, as to sing with the spirit and the understanding,—

"How happy are they, who the Saviour obey,"

that he did not add with a glowing heart—

> "Oh, that all might believe,
> And salvation receive,
> And their hope and their joy be the same."

Again, it is the duty of all Christians to cultivate a missionary spirit. Just as it is the duty of all Christians to grow in grace; to become more and more like Christ; to increase and abound in love to God, to one another, and to all men; to cherish the temper of Heaven, put on its lineaments, and ripen for its society and its joys: just so it is their duty to cultivate a missionary spirit; for these are not different things, but one and the same. Christianity is in its very nature active, germinant, growing, expansive. In its relations to communities and to mankind, as well as in its relations to individuals, it is like the mustard seed, full of vitality, growing, active; like leaven, penetrating, diffusive, assimilating; like the stone cut out without hands, which became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

The work of missions is not the work of the Board, or of a particular society; but of the whole church. The cause I plead to-day, brethren, is not my cause, but yours; the cause of your Lord and Master, and of all who love him. Jesus Christ calls all his people to coöperate with him in the blessed work for which he died, and rose, and reigns. By his authority and his love, he has bound upon all hearts the obligation to preach his gospel to every creature. Obedience is essential to spiritual prosperity. The primitive church felt this, and acted accordingly. It was poor, despised, persecuted; yet it was a great missionary society, where each member esteemed it a duty and a privilege to do all in his power to impart to all men the salvation in

which he rejoiced. While this spirit lived and reigned in her members, the church shone in the beauty of holiness. Converts were multiplied as the drops of morning dew. No weapon formed against her could prosper. In the face of opposition, she went forward to the conquest of the world with inexpressible energy and signal success. But ere long, pride and contention, worldliness and sloth crept in. The spirit of missions was lost, and a thousand years of darkness and spiritual desolation ensued. Thus it has ever been, thus it will be. Whenever the whole church is imbued with this spirit, and enters fully into this work, she will look forth, fair as the moon, clear as the sun. Her walls will be salvation, and her gates praise. The final triumphs of redeeming mercy will not then long be delayed. Soon will voices be heard in Heaven, proclaiming, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ."

Let every Christian then cultivate a missionary spirit in his own heart, and do all he can to promote the same spirit in his fellow Christians. Do this by obtaining and diffusing information on missions; by secret and social prayer for the perishing heathen, and for those who have gone to testify among them of Jesus and salvation; specially by a devout and regular attendance upon the monthly concert of prayer for missions; by an example of cheerful and self-denying devotedness to this cause. In this work, you know not how much you may do by the blessing of God on your self-denying, prayerful labors. And no honest effort made for this cause, can be lost, either as to its influence in helping onward the grand result, or its gracious reward in the great day of the Lord's coming.

Finally, how great the blessedness of living unto Christ, in the great work of spreading his gospel through

the world. The Christian whose heart is fixed upon this as the great business of life, is lifted above selfish and temporary pursuits, interests, and vexations. The glory of God, the love of Christ, the welfare of the undying soul, the realities of eternity, fill his mind and heart. He has fellowship with his exalted Lord, in the very purpose for which he reigns. He coöperates with the Eternal Spirit in those exhibitions of power, and wisdom, and mercy, which fill Heaven with everlasting praise. He walks with God, who so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him, might not perish, but have everlasting life; and who will have all men come unto him. How ennobling such employment, how honorable, how sanctifying, how full of the assurance and the foretaste of Heaven! And then how great a good is secured by every successful effort in spreading the gospel through the world. Thus the world shall be converted to God. And to convert one sinner from the error of his way—what is it? To save a soul from death! an immortal soul! Who can compute its worth? Who can measure its joys as it pursues its boundless, endless career from glory to glory, and bliss to bliss. A deathless mind, rescued from ruin and raised to Heaven by God's blessing on your efforts, and in answer to your prayers! What bosom does not swell with emotion at the thought! What child of God does not bless his Heavenly Father who calls him to such a work? What self-denial, or sacrifice, or suffering, deserves to be so much as named in the comparison? An hour is coming, when to have been the honored instrument of such a work, to meet before the eternal throne a fellow immortal, redeemed through our humble agency from the dark debasing bondage of superstition and error, and made perfect in the Saviour's likeness, will be a source of purer joy,

and of livelier gratitude to God, than if he had given us all the wealth and honors of the world, without calling us to such a work! Lord, teach us to know our heavenly calling, and breathe into us its true spirit!

SERMON XXIII.*

THE GOSPEL TRIUMPHANT.

"For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."—ISAIAH xi. 9.

IF the waters of the ocean were suddenly drained, and the channels of the great deep laid bare, a rugged, unseemly spectacle would meet the eye. The elements of sublimity and beauty might then be seen, but strangely disfigured, and blended in rude chaotic masses; profound valleys and dark ravines, the pathways of the monsters of the deep; gloomy caverns, never visited by the light of day; towering mountains, abrupt headlands, and precipitous rocks, the cause of many disasters to the adventurous seaman, would form an uncouth, repulsive scene.

All these are hidden now by a veil which the Almighty has thrown over them; he has covered them with a fluid, bright, transparent, elastic, filling all the depths, smoothing all the asperities, reducing mountains and valleys to one level, and spreading from the equator to the poles, ever in motion, ever obedient to his will, whether he bids its mountain billows utter his

* This was the last sermon preached by this devoted servant of Christ. It was marvellously preserved amid the raging of the elements, saturated by water, but left entirely legible, a solemn message to the church. Those who heard it in Newark two weeks previous to his death, will remember the tender earnestness with which it was delivered. One remarked, "he is ripening for Heaven." In Sixth Street Church, New York, where he often attended social meetings for prayer, the feeling was that Dr. Armstrong was doing his last work.

praise in awful tones, or its unruffled surface reflect his glories to the tranquil heavens bending over it.

Like the dark, rude bed of ocean, emptied of its waters, has been the moral aspect of our world in all ages and countries since the fall. If we look abroad over the nations to-day, what disorder, misery, and ruin, meet the eye and pain the heart!

But the text speaks of a blessed change to be realized ere long: of a coming day, when the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. In the preceding context, the prophetic pencil delineates a revolution, thorough, universal, permanent, and most benign; the selfish passions and lawless appetites that have convulsed society for sixty centuries, are calmed and subdued; violence and fraud, rapacity and cruelty, prevail no more; no more do the strong prey upon the weak, nor the crafty plot for the ruin of the simple; innocence, and peace, and mutual confidence reign; the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them; and the cow and the bear shall feed, their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and the suckling child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den, and they shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea!

Behold, my hearers, *the cause* of this marvellous transformation! Consider *the means* by which this blessed change will be commenced, and carried on, and completed: by the knowledge of himself everywhere spread abroad, and filling the whole earth, as the waters cover the sea, so will he who sitteth on the

throne subdue, and purify, and renovate a fallen world, till he hath made all things new.

All knowledge is valuable; to be without it is not good. Shut up in ignorance, the spirit pines and famishes; error and falsehood are mental poison, working death; all knowledge is from God, and leads to God; he made the objects of knowledge; he adjusts and governs their relations; he gave the mind its power to know, he sustains its activity, he kindles its quenchless thirst; the universe he has made is radiant with glory, and vocal in his praise to all holy intelligence.

Not so to fallen man; he likes not to retain God in his knowledge, and his foolish heart is darkened; absorbed in sense, blinded by sin, he sees not God in all the beauties of creation, nor hears his voice in all its harmonies. Not from Nature's volume does the knowledge of the Lord shine on this dark world with enlightening, saving power; nay, it must beam upon man from the page of revelation; he must behold the glory of God as a sovereign and a judge, a just God and a Saviour, shining in the face of Jesus Christ; he must learn his holiness and grace, his truth and love, as God has made them radiant in the cross, resplendent in the plan of salvation, through the atoning blood of Christ, and by the renewing power of the Holy Ghost. This is the knowledge of the Lord of which the text declares, it shall fill the earth, breaking up the old bondage of sin and error, bringing in the reign of truth, and purity, and love. This is life eternal, that they might know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. The knowledge of the Lord, in his pardoning mercy, in his sanctifying grace, in his covenant faithfulness and love —of God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself —by his Gospel abolishing death, and bringing life and immortality to light; of God as a friend, a father, a re-

fuge in adversity and sorrow, a satisfying, eternal portion!

Fill the earth with this knowledge, and at once you shut out all false religion, and all irreligion; idolatry with its dark and bloody rites; superstition and fanaticism, with their empty forms and vain austerities, degrading the soul and kindling the fires of intolerance and bigotry; every form, indeed, of superstition, infidelity, and atheism. No place can be found for these in a world that is *full* of the knowledge of the Lord. The millions that bow down to images of Boodh, or adore the countless gods of Brahma, or mutter charms to obscene and cruel fetishes, or grope in Mohammedan delusion, or in the dim twilight of a corrupt Christianity, follow the traditions of men, and trust in priestly absolution, shall then walk in the light of the Lord; they shall know the truth, and the truth shall make them free.

Just imagine every dark shade of religious error dispelled and driven out of the world by the universal prevalence of the knowledge of the living and true God, and how changed would be the condition of men! what a load of imposture, oppression, and suffering, would be at once thrown off! from what depths of intellectual and moral degradation would man emerge! what incentives to appetite and passion would be for ever quenched! what fountains of suffering and sorrow for ever dried up!

But the knowledge of the Lord does not *merely* dispel the shades of night, and chase away the phantoms of guilt and fear that haunt the region of darkness and the shadow of death! It does more, *far more.* By this knowledge the Divine Spirit puts forth his renewing and cleansing powers upon the heart, and the sinner is created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works; sanctify them by the truth, thy word is truth; the law of the Lord is perfect, *converting the soul;* fill the earth with

the knowledge of the Lord, and you teach men to love God, and to love one another. By this knowledge the enmity of the heart is slain; man is reconciled to God; he has peace of conscience; he is at peace with his fellow man; the love of Christ constrains him, and he lives not unto himself; he seeks not his own; he is taught to dwell in love, forbearing and forgiving, if any man has a quarrel against any, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven him. Let this knowledge fill the earth; let men everywhere receive it in the love of it, and its pure and peaceful influences will pervade and hallow all the relations of society; they will inform and animate all systems of government, and all modes of administration; they will bind communities and nations to each other in perpetual friendship, and unite and cement in one great lasting brotherhood, the whole family of man! Then shall they beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; and the nations shall learn war no more. War, the science of devastation and murder, which in all ages has absorbed such an amount of talent, and wealth, and labor, shall be obsolete and forgotten. The clanking of fetters, and the groans of the oppressed, shall be heard no more, for there shall be none to hurt nor to destroy. Exhausting toil, and pining want, and squalid poverty, shall cease, for labor shall have its reward, and the earth yield her increase, and God, even our own God, shall bless us: God shall bless us, and all the ends of the earth shall fear *him*.

Such fruits the knowledge of the Lord has yielded in our own day! such influences the Gospel has put forth, and is now putting forth, on tribes of dark, degraded men; partially, I admit, and on a limited scale; yet upon portions of the human family as abject and wretched as any other, and just in proportion as that

knowledge has flown in upon them. Look, for illustration, at the stupid Greenlanders and Esquimaux of the polar regions; roused from their torpor, emerging from filth and wretchedness, they from habits of industry and forecast, acquire a taste for social comforts, and rejoice in the hope of Heaven. Look at the roaming savages of South Africa, now gathered into villages, cultivating their lands, cherishing the arts, making the desert smile, rejoicing in the endearments of domestic life, and in the anticipation of eternal bliss; see the bloodthirsty cannibal of New Zealand converting his weapons of war into implements of husbandry, learning of the meek and lowly Saviour to love his enemies, and training up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord the children he was wont to dedicate at Moloch's shrine, and to familiarize from infancy to deeds of violence and blood. The knowledge of the Lord has imparted new life to the torpid mind, taught the sensual, down-trodden soul to pant after immortality, and tamed the vindictive, tiger-like spirit.

Or select an individual, as an example of the change wrought in man by the knowledge of the Lord. All who are familiar with the history of missions in Southern Africa, have heard of Christian Africaner. In his youth the chief of a Hottentot clan, then a slave to a border colonist, goaded to madness by oppression, he murdered his master, and fled into the interior; there he became the leader of a band of robbers and murderers, and for years the scourge of the frontiers and the terror of Southern Africa; a price was set upon his head, and company after company sought in vain to hunt him down. At length an intrepid missionary penetrated to his Kraal in the desert, bearing the message of Heavenly mercy. As that youthful servant of Christ sought the murderer's hiding place, he was looked

upon as one devoted to death, and warned not to venture into the tiger's den. But the love of Christ constrained him, and he went onward; he found that wild savage man; he spoke to him of the love of God in giving his Son to die for sinners, and the compassion of Jesus in giving his life a ransom for the lost. Soon his attention was arrested; light dawned on his dark mind; his hard heart was melted and subdued, as he listened to the wonderful things revealed in the Word of Life. Whole nights he kept his youthful teacher ministering to his thirst for the knowledge of the Lord. That knowledge filled his soul, and his life became as remarkable for gentleness and love, as it had been for deeds of rapine and blood; he became noted as a peace-maker far and near, amid the surrounding tribes, making long journeys to quiet their feuds, and rushing in between contending hordes, at the hazard of his life, to stay the shedding of blood. His people revered and loved him as a father; his very countenance lost the traces of its wonted ferocity, and wore an expression of kindness, and the tear of pity trembled in his eye. Full of years and ripe for Heaven, his last hours were spent exhorting his people to live in peace, and to cherish the Gospel and the missionaries when he was gone. "Beware," said he, as they gathered round his dying couch, "that you do not fall into those sins into which I have often led you. My former life has been stained with blood, but Jesus Christ has pardoned me, and now he is taking me to Heaven. Dwell in peace and love, and the God of peace shall be with you."

This, brethren, is the knowledge of the Lord! What a world would this be if that knowledge were universal,—if it *filled* the earth, as the waters cover the sea. But the mouth of the Lord hath spoken: a day is coming when none shall need to say to his neighbor, know

...ness were given, still darkness ...
gross darkness the people! The ...
rites impure and bloody, and the ...
plied. The dark places of the ea...
bitations of cruelty, and the peopl...
is no vision! But it shall not be ...
new era of light and love shall ...
world; the earth shall be full of ...
Lord, as the waters cover the sea...
vade and fill up all the channels ...
the knowledge of the Lord shall p...
ed region, illumine every dark noo...
and shed its blessed radiance on e...
of man! Like the resistless swell ...
the tide of knowledge, and holi...
rise, and spread, and prevail, till i...
and covers every continent and isl...
the globe an unbroken wave of ligh...

And this result shall be realize...
God on human agency. Not to ...
"Ye are the light of the world," ...
by his blood, and called and taugh...
by working miracles did ...

and fro, and knowledge shall be increased. Here, in the Church of God, are the wells of salvation, whence they shall draw the living waters.

And let it not be forgotten that all the effort and prayer which shall accomplish a revolution so vast and blessed, will be put forth *by individuals;* all the agency employed will be personal agency; all the prayer offered, the self-denial practised, the sacrifices cheerfully made, the sufferings patiently borne, in filling the earth with the knowledge of the Lord, will be the tribute of the willing minds, and hearts, and hands of Christian men, and women, and children, each redeemed by the blood of Christ, each constrained by the love of Christ, each consecrating to the service of Christ a life that owes all its present joys, and its more precious hopes, to his dying love!

And thus does the grand result, in all its majesty and blessedness, connect itself with the intercessions of the humble disciple in his closet, and with the circles where those who love the Saviour meet to pour out their hearts in united prayer, and with the daily habits of economy, and acts of self-denial, by which the poor widow, and the devout laborer, and the pious child, treasure up their gifts for the altar of the Lord. These are the drops of rain that feed the fountains, and rills, and streams, and rivers, whose confluence is the mighty ocean, bright, transparent, joyous, covering this dark, rugged world, and reflecting the purity and the peace of Heaven!

Yes, my hearers, each of us may bear a part in this blessed consummation. If we have a heart for such a work; if we are willing, in the sphere where God has placed us, to do what we can; to labor and pray for this as the great end of life, according to the ability that God giveth; each of us may contribute to swell the

tide of light and joy that shall fill the earth, as the waters cover the sea! Not one honest effort shall be unavailing, nor one fervent prayer unanswered, nor the humblest laborer forgotten in the mighty aggregate. Is there a nobler object for which to live!

In our day, God is calling us to this work by the voice of his Providence, and by the movements of his Spirit, not less than by the precepts and promises of his word. Every thoughtful observer must perceive, that preparation is making on a vast scale for changes, more extensive and momentous than the world has ever witnessed!

Facilities of intercourse bring the remotest nations into the same neighborhood; commercial enterprise explores the darkest regions, and studies the manners and habits of the most secluded tribes; improvements in science and the arts levy contributions on the hidden stores of nature, and make the very elements subservient to the will of man; knowledge and truth are brought more and more into contact with ignorance and error; and the infernal spells that have bound untutored nations for ages, lose their power. Already a spirit of inquiry, and a thirst for knowledge, and an expectation of change, have gone forth to the ends of the earth, and the power of the press and of other means of education keep pace with the growing desire for instruction.

Every aggressive movement of the day finds its centre and salient point in Christendom; and pre-eminently in that portion of Christendom that acknowledges the supremacy of the Bible, and prizes the knowledge of the Lord as the pillar of its most valued institutions, and the source of its best hopes.

Meanwhile those vast systems of religious error that [redacted] long overshadowed the nations, are everywhere

waning and dying. Boodhism and Brahminism, and the delusions of Mohammed, still hold a nominal sway over more than half the population of the globe. But how changed their position! how shorn of their power! how tame and spiritless are they! what missionaries do they send out! which of their votaries dreams of making conquests! Bereft of vigor and vitality, they are giant corpses, prostrate on the fields of their old renown, and soon to become an abhorrence and a hissing where they were once adored!

Christianity, spurious or genuine, formal or spiritual, traditional or based on the Word of God, moulded and fashioned by human authority, or acknowledging Christ only as supreme, is evidently to conquer and reign over this world.

And who, with the Bible in his hand, and looking at the changes that have taken place in the last half century, and the steady progress of knowledge, and free discussion, and liberty of conscience, can doubt *which* of these opposing systems shall ultimately triumph? Can the human mind relapse into the intellectual torpor of the dark ages? and re-adopt the exploded maxim that ignorance is the mother of devotion?

Nay, my brethren, it cannot be. The man of sin shall be destroyed, and that wicked one who, in the very temple of God, exalts himself above all that is called God, and that is worshipped, shall be consumed. The *knowledge* of the Lord shall cover the earth; the religion of the *Bible* shall fill the world!

In the sure prospect of such a consummation, and amid so many indications that it is drawing nigh, how great are the privileges, the obligations, the responsibilities of Christians in this land of civil and religious liberty, this land of churches, unfettered by alliance

with the State, of Bibles, and Sabbaths, and revivals of religion! Surely we are called to bear no common part in this blessed enterprise of filling the world with the knowledge of the Lord!

ADDRESS

To the Society for Inquiry, in the Theological Seminary at Bangor, 1836, "*Why young men should become Missionaries.*"

In an address before a Society for Inquiry on the subject of Foreign Missions, I take it for granted that those to whom my remarks should be specially directed, believe themselves called to the ministry of reconciliation.

Under such a conviction, you have entered upon a course of moral and intellectual culture and discipline with this object in view. Having expended time, labor, and money, in preparing for the work, you are inquiring where your services are most needed, and may most effectually promote the great object of the ministry. Your solicitude for a satisfactory reply to this inquiry increases as the time approaches in which you must go forth into the wide field. That field is divided into two great departments, the domestic and the foreign. These are distinct, though parts of the same, and mutually dependent.

The work to be performed, the appropriate attainments and qualifications of the laborers, and the grounds of confidence that their labor shall not be in vain in the Lord, are essentially the same in both.

My object is to present considerations in favor of personal consecration to the work of Foreign Missions. I do not say that these considerations ought to be deci-

sive with all who have not yet made up their minds, as to their field of labor.

I will not assert that they ought to determine *all* who now hear me to go far hence to the Gentiles. In particular cases, there may be weighty reasons against going abroad. Of these I cannot judge in every case; so there may be substantial reasons why individuals should remain at home and labor together in the harvest on the domestic field. Where such reasons exist, it is believed they are rarely overlooked.

I wish to show that every student of Theology is bound to give the subject a serious and thorough examination. That no man may innocently or safely enter the ministry, taking it for granted that he is not called to labor in the foreign field; that the arguments in favor of going abroad are such, and so many, as to deserve patient and prayerful attention.

The ministerial commission, in its plain literal bearing and import, is wholly missionary: "Go make disciples of all nations:" "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." Such was the language of the great Head of the church when he instituted the ministry, and sent forth his servants to publish in his name the glad tidings of great joy.

Their commission was missionary; it bound them to do all they could that the gospel might be preached as speedily as possible in all the world, to every creature. While there remained a nation, or tribe, or family, that had never heard the joyful sound, it was unfulfilled. There is no other or different commission under which Jesus Christ calls any of us to preach the gospel. It lays the whole body of ministers of this generation under the same obligation that it imposed upon those to whom it was first given. If it required them to leave Judea and Galilee, (though doubtless there was

enough to be done there) and go out among the Gentiles, I see not why it does not require the very same of us. The whole *primâ facie* bearing of the instrument is aggressive; every man who acts under it is in fact a missionary. If he stays at home he is bound to give a reason for so doing. He that sends others abroad, must stay upon the principle that he can thus do most to spread the gospel through the world. Closely connected with this is another thought worthy of attention. Ministerial labor in the foreign field, tends most directly to accomplish the great object for which the gospel ministry was instituted. That object is to publish the gospel to every creature; to preach repentance and the remission of sins, in the name of Jesus, to all nations. Where the gospel is fully preached already this object is, in an important sense, accomplished. To some the doctrine of Christ crucified is foolishness, to others the power of God and the wisdom of God unto salvation. But in both God is glorified. The heralds of salvation are, unto God, a sweet savor of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish. Our business as evangelists is not to convert men, but to preach the gospel.

When the glad tidings are fully proclaimed everywhere, the heralds have fulfilled their commission. He who bears the message to a tribe or a family, or an individual who never heard it before, contributes to this end in a manner more direct and immediate than if he had labored with ever so much success in reiterating the gospel call upon those who have often heard it, and made light of it.

In this way also, the church is carried forward directly towards the great end for which she was formed, and is sustained, and blessed. What is that end? Not solely nor chiefly for the growth of individual believers in holiness and consolation, and that, by social ordinances,

mutual sympathy, and succor, and all the sweet fellowship of kindred spirits, they may ripen for Heaven. These no doubt are blessed fruits of the communion of believers in the church. But the grand object for which they are thus associated is, that by their combined prayers and efforts, they may hold forth the word of life, bearing a distinct and commanding testimony for God amid the sins and errors of our apostate race: becoming in fact, what they are in the plan and purpose of the Great Redeemer, the *light of the world*, and the salt of the earth. And when God is merciful to the church, and blesses her, and causes his face to shine upon her, it is that his way may be known *upon the earth*, his saving health among all nations.

Now it is chiefly by the going forth of her sons to declare among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and by the flowing out of the sympathies, prayers, and contributions of the people of God to encourage and sustain them, and bring down a blessing upon their labors, that the church is carried forward toward the great end for which she exists.

Her pastors may be many and faithful; her doctrines, order, and discipline pure; all within her borders may seem peaceful and prosperous; but if she sends forth no messengers of mercy to the perishing, she is not fulfilling her high vocation, nor is she authorized to expect the smiles of her glorious Lord. It is by scattering, she is to increase; it is by devising liberal things that she must stand; she is more blessed in giving than in receiving. When Israel bringeth forth fruit unto himself he is an empty vine. His glory is to blossom and bud and fill the face of the world with fruit.

The fact that ministers of the gospel are most needed abroad, is another reason for personal consecration to the work of foreign missions. Other things being

equal, benevolence guided by wisdom will certainly lead us first to that part of the field of labor whose necessities are most urgent. But whatever may be the destitutions of our own country, nothing among us will bear a comparison either as to extent or extremity, with the spiritual wants of the unevangelized world. The number of the destitute abroad, is at a moderate calculation, fifty times greater than the whole population of our country. And besides there is a living church and an evangelical minister to every twelve hundred souls in our whole population. Here are thousands of Sunday Schools, millions of Tracts, and a Bible for every family that will receive it, and the richest religious literature in the world. Here, the Lord's day, regularly occurring, reminds every one of God and Christ, the soul, and eternity. And ten thousand sanctuaries with open doors invite men to enter and worship Jehovah, where his name is recorded, and where he has promised to meet them that seek him, and commune with them from the mercy seat. There is no portion of our land where a sinner anxious for salvation may not obtain an answer to the inquiry, "What must I do to be saved?"

Look abroad now over the vast regions where more than seven hundred and fifty millions of our fellow men are forming their characters and filling up their probation for eternity. Not a missionary nor a church, nor a Sabbath School on an average, for two millions of souls. Languages spoken by many millions into which the word of God has never been translated, nor a line of revealed truth ever published. Powerful nations not having a term to express that holiness without which no man shall see the Lord; where no Sabbath has ever dawned, no sanctuary has ever been erected, no intimation ever given that "God so loved the world, as to give his only begotten Son, that whosoever be-

lieveth in him might not perish but have eternal life." Their spiritual condition is fitly represented by the prophet's vision, when the Spirit of the Lord led him forth, and he beheld spread out in the open valley, in utter confusion and chaos, the bones of men bleaching in the sun and winds of Heaven, very many, and very dry. We hear it sometimes said there are heathen enough at home. I admit and deplore the ignorance, error, and irreligion that are sweeping so many into remediless ruin; but this results from the wilful neglect of the proffered means of recovery and restoration. Their condemnation is that light has come into the world, and they love darkness rather than light.

How different this from the starless midnight of superstition and delusion which reigns, and has reigned for so many ages, in sepulchral gloom over the unevangelized world. There the light of nature and reason is clouded and perverted by the devices of Satan, and the many inventions of wicked men. The consciences of men are torpid and powerless, for God is not in all their thoughts; and even intellect, crushed and buried under mountains of falsehood and absurdity, seems to have lost all elasticity and vigor. Surely if the direst necessity may claim benevolent attention, if degradation and wretchedness may appeal to Christian compassion, the servant of Christ will feel that the cry of the heathen world, "Come over and help us," may not be slightly disregarded.

And this the more, because, while such is the call for labor abroad, comparatively few go abroad. The whole number of ordained ministers who have gone out to the foreign field, since the formation of the A. B. C. F. M., is to the number in the churches at home nearly as one to eighty. While the number of souls for whom they labor is as fifty to one; that is, the supply of minis-

ters at home, is to the supply abroad as four thousand to one; and this while the field *is the world*, while the provisions of the gospel are sufficient for all the perishing, and while the commission, under which every minister preaches, embraces the whole human family, and requires him to do all that in him lies to publish the glad tidings to every creature without delay. The gospel ministry, instituted for the world, and intrusted for the common benefit of mankind with a message infinitely momentous to every creature, appears at this time, to the eye of him who takes in the world at one view, as if pent up and restricted to a corner; the members of the nominal church often crossing each other's paths, and not unfrequently wasting time and strength in unprofitable rivalry and wicked contention, while the great mass of those to whom the gospel is sent are perishing for lack of vision, no man caring for their souls, no man pointing them to the Lamb of God. Is it any wonder that to so great an extent we labor in vain, and spend our strength for naught? Is it strange that the whole number of additions from the world to evangelical churches in our land, ordinarily, is less, on an average, than five to each minister; and in large sections of the church, for successive years, less, than that number? If the field is the world, is it not very evident that many of us have mistaken as to the part of it in which the Lord calls us to labor? And can we expect his blessing when we are not where he would have us to be? And is not the fact, that up to this time so few comparatively have gone abroad, a reason why those who have not yet entered the work should look to the foreign field?

If so few comparatively go where the will of Christ is so plain, and the work is so great, and the necessities of our fellow men are so urgent, ought not every one

who enters the ministry to hesitate before he resolves to swell the number already so disproportionate of those who labor in the domestic field? Ought he not to have very clear convictions of duty, before he ventures, bearing as he does a message of mercy for the world, with a commission to publish it to every creature, to turn away from nine tenths of his fellow men, whose wants and woes call upon him with importunate earnestness, "Come over and help us?"

Nay, brethren, allow me to inquire further, if these things are so? Ought not many who have settled down in the churches, without any thorough previous investigation of the question of personal duty as to foreign missions, to inquire whether they may not have mistaken the Master's will?—whether the Holy Spirit may not be saying of them, as he said of Paul and Barnabas while they ministered in the church at Antioch, "Separate unto me Paul and Barnabas for the work whereunto I have called them?"

This leads to another remark: the good of the church at home requires that many more go to preach Christ among the heathen. This it does in various ways. Great temporal prosperity has ever been full of peril to the Church. Wealth, and ease, and honor, have produced worldliness of spirit and sloth, luxury, and pride: thus preparing the way for strife and laxity of discipline and errors in doctrine, until churches, once flourishing, have become apostate and been given up of God; having lost the savor of godliness, they have been cast out and trodden under foot. Perhaps there never was a time when temporal prosperity flowed in upon the professed followers of Christ in such a tide, as in our country, at the present time. The amount of wealth and worldly influence, in the hands of church members, is enormous and rapidly increasing. What shall save

the church from the disasters which heretofore have not failed to attend upon such temporal prosperity? disasters of whose near approach, we are not without many alarming symptoms already visible! I answer, nothing but such a spirit of enlarged, active, self-denying benevolence, diffused through the churches, as shall at once so fill the hearts of God's people as to shut out a proud and idolatrous complacency in their prosperity; and at the same time so take hold upon their consciences, and enlist their warmest affections, as to make them feel both the sin and the folly of hoarding or squandering upon selfish gratifications, that property which God has intrusted to them as his stewards, to be expended for the promotion of his cause, in the salvation of their fellow men. But no object short of the evangelization of the world, is great, and noble, and arduous enough, to awaken, sustain, and give full exercise to such a spirit of benevolence. Either the churches of this land must be fully enlisted in the great work of publishing the gospel through the world, as an object to be sought systematically and perseveringly by Christians of all ranks and conditions in life, or our worldly prosperity will be our ruin. Covetousness, pride, and vanity will speedily prepare the way for the prevalence of a cold, dead, orthodoxy, or of some specious form of baptized infidelity; and the glory will depart from our Israel, the souls of our children and our children's children will wither and die, unless God, in severe mercy, sends upon us some wide and wasting national judgments, or permits the fires of persecution to be kindled. But no means are so effectual to awaken this deep and diffusive interest in the work of missions as the going forth of laborers. It was by the personal consecration to this work, of Mills and his companions, that the churches were first excited to inquire into the claims of this cause,

and to pray and labor for it. And the progress of the work, in every part of the church, has been very much in proportion as the sons and daughters of Zion have willingly offered themselves to go far hence to the Gentiles. Their example and influence before they went forth; their communications while toiling amid the desolations of heathenism; and, in not a few instances, their holy triumphs when dying as martyrs to this cause, have done more to endear it to their fellow Christians, more to bring it home to their business and bosoms as a matter of deep personal interest, than all other means put together. I have no doubt that in this way Hall and Richards, Fisk and Mrs. Newell, Judson and Winslow, and many more, bearing the heat and burden of the day in distant lands, have done and are doing more for the churches at home in elevating the standard of piety, and promoting a spirit of prayer, and self-denying benevolence, than if they had remained at home and labored ever so faithfully for these objects. And the spirit thus excited has not confined itself to the sphere where it began to act. Its propitious influences have been felt in the cause of Christian and ministerial education of home missions, of Bible and Tract distribution, imparting new vigor and activity to every good purpose and effort; thus it will be still. The spirit of missions will be diffused through the church very much in proportion to the numbers who consecrate themselves personally to the missionary work. And when this number has so increased that each individual church, and each smaller circle of Christian friends, has its representation among the heathen, sustained by its prayers and contributions, and by direct communication with it, keeping up a lively fellowship and a warm sympathy, then may we look for such unity of spirit and such union of exertion and supplica-

tion through the church as were witnessed in the primitive church, or as shall prepare the way for more than Pentecostal effusions of the Holy Ghost. Who that has seen the spiritual strength and beauty put on by a circle of Christian friends when they have parted with a beloved one, and bid him God speed on his errand of mercy to some far distant tribe of benighted Pagans, does not feel that the church would be blessed in sending forth many more of her sons to this work!

And this leads to another remark: that in a personal consecration to the work of missions, you have reason to hope for more extensive and lasting usefulness than in a different course. This is true, because the work of missions to the heathen is adapted to call out and invigorate the faculties and graces of the servants of Christ, so that their intellect, and moral strength, and efficiency, become positively greater than they would have been if they had not engaged in this work.

And secondly: the same amount of labor, crowned with equal success, in the foreign field, tells far more upon the grand ultimate object of all ministerial labors than if it had been performed at home.

The first reason is but an exemplification of the common maxim, that character is moulded and modified by circumstances, and that great occasions make great men. To these must be added, in the present case, that the Great Head of the Church bestows peculiar gifts and endowments upon those who, at his call, enter upon services peculiarly arduous and important. To name individuals in illustration of this topic might seem invidious. I may appeal to those who have been familiarly acquainted with the brethren who have gone out from our churches to labor among the heathen, if they have not repeatedly been surprised to observe the evi-

dent improvement of character which has taken place; the enlargement of their views, the elevation and manliness of their spirit; their fertility of resources; their courage and decision in facing dangers, or engaging in arduous undertakings for the furtherance of the cause to which not a few, who, if they had remained at home, would have been common men, have obtained in this way a force and an unction that has placed them not a wit behind the most useful and influential.

Analogous developments of character take place every day where men throw their whole souls into any great and worthy enterprise. They may be expected, most of all, in this most sublime and blessed work, the special patronage and promised aid and presence of him who is the Father of lights, from whom cometh down every good and perfect gift.

But besides this, the same amount of labor, attended by equal success, is more valuable in the foreign field than it is at home; more valuable, not because souls are more precious there than at home, but because of its bearing upon the great ultimate result.

Suppose two men, equal in their gifts and qualifications for usefulness to labor, each a score of years in the Gospel ministry with equal diligence and success, one in the church at home, the other, like Paul, where Christ was not named, so that, through him, "they to whom he was not spoken of, see, and they that had not heard, understand;" each preaches the Gospel a certain number of times—is instrumental in the conversion of a number of souls—gathers one or more churches, and builds them up in the faith and order of the Gospel, and through the press, contributes to a certain extent to the spiritual benefit of all who read what he has written. But mark the difference in the effect of their

labors. The first has but contributed, in common with many others, to maintain at its previous tone, perhaps to elevate a few degrees, the spiritual life of the region where he has labored. The other, by the blessing of God, has introduced a living principle, diffusive and germinant, as the leaven or the mustard seed, where all before was desolate and dead. One has guided the waters of life into a channel more convenient and abundant for the refreshing of a company of Zion's pilgrims than if he had not labored; the other has opened a fountain in the desert, where the healing streams gush out for those who were perishing of thirst, and will not cease to flow; one has shed the light of truth and love in a clearer and stronger lustre upon those unto whom the Sun of Righteousness had already arisen with healing on his wings; the other has borne the lamp of life where darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people, and by its rays, though feeble and tremulous, the anxious sinner may spell out an answer to the great inquiry! If Brainerd and Martyn, Milne and Cary, Morrison and Hall, had labored at home, no doubt they would have been able and successful pastors; yet not more so than hundreds of their contemporaries. But they went forth, for his name's sake, to toil and die among the Gentiles. And their earthly elevation, shining as stars of the first magnitude in view of the whole church, and of increasing multitudes of the heathen, is but the type and emblem of that everlasting splendor with which, having turned many to righteousness, they shall shine in the firmament of glory for ever.

And who can doubt that Judson and Poor, Goodell and Bingham, and the great body of their fellow laborers, have already accomplished far more for the glory

of Christ in the world's conversion, than if they had labored with equal fidelity and diligence at home. Or where is the pious physician in our country whose life and labors, can be compared, in their bearing, upon the universal spread of the Gospel, and the best, the eternal interests of mankind, or even in the alleviation of present suffering, with those of Scudder, Grant, or Parker? If we look simply at direct influence upon the church at home, the missionary who is toiling for the diffusion of the light of life in the far distant regions of Pagan darkness or Mohammedan delusion, has reached a moral elevation whence he can embrace, in one clear and comprehensive view, the whole church, away from those local and partial influences that limit and obscure the field of vision, to the most comprehensive and perspicuous minds less favorably situated. He stands on an eminence where all eyes may be fixed upon him, and his voice of affectionate warning or exhortation may be heard through all the churches. Who can measure the usefulness of such appeals as the last message of Gordon Hall to the churches of his native land? or Scudder's letters to physicians, or to the young men in our colleges? or the affecting call of the Baptist brethren in Burmah for men and funds to prosecute their work?

For myself, I fully believe that in keeping the last command of her Lord, the church will find there is great reward. Many of those influences by which knowledge and holiness shall be so increased that "the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun," "the feeble shall be as David," will flow back upon her as the blessed fruits of her labors, and sacrifices, and self-denial, in freely giving to the whole world that which she has freely received.

The Church at Antioch was more blessed, I have no doubt, in sending away Paul and Barnabas upon their missionary tour, than if she had retained them to minister at her altars. And the churches of this land will lose nothing, nay, they will be every way gainers, by consecrating the most highly gifted of their sons and daughters to go forth, sustained by their gifts, sympathies, and prayers, as heralds of salvation to dying men. Nor have they who, in simplicity and godly sincerity, consecrate themselves to this work, any reason to fear they shall be losers in this life, or that which is to come, by their self-devotion.

No doubt the foreign missionary work has its peculiar snares and temptations; and the faithful laborer must encounter many and sore trials, and be exposed to severe privations and hardships. Yet, take it all in all, no other calling or situation on earth is so favorable to eminent holiness and intimate communion with Christ, as that of him who bears the message of Heavenly mercy to his benighted fellow men in heathen lands.

And as a body, our brethren and sisters, who are now toiling in this work, far away from beloved relatives, and the scenes and associates of early life, and all the precious privileges of their native land, are the happiest company of the followers of Christ on earth.

When compelled by failure of health or other causes to retire from the work for a season, they manifest great earnestness of desire to return to it. And their uniform declaration is, we would not exchange places with any of our brethren.

Such is their testimony in their confidential communications to their dearest friends—in their seasons of sickness and affliction, as well as in times of prosperity. In the honest hour of death, they who are called away

when just entering upon the work (like Harriet Newell, the first martyr in this holy cause,) bless God that he ever put it into their hearts to engage in this work of mercy. And they who are spared to wear out life in the holy toil, count it (next to their conversion) their chief mercy that God has called them thus to serve him in the Gospel of his Son among the heathen. Thus Paul esteemed it, after almost thirty years of labors, reproaches and privations, dangers, stripes, imprisonments, and daily deaths. "Unto me," saith he, "who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given to preach among the Gentiles, the unsearchable riches of Christ."

Not merely that Christ Jesus should count him faithful, putting him into the ministry, but that he should send him forth as a missionary to the heathen. Nor did Paul think differently when, standing on the verge of life, he exhorted his beloved son, Timothy, to do the work of an evangelist. "For," said he, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand." Nor afterward, when having walked in the steps of Jesus Christ, the great missionary, and overcome through his blood, he sat down with him upon his throne, according to his word, even as he overcame and sat down with the Father upon his throne. No man can be a loser in the honest and unreserved consecration of himself to this cause. For thus saith the faithful and true witness, "Whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the Gospel's, the same shall save it. And there is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake and the Gospel's, but he shall receive an hundred fold in this present time, and in the world to come, life everlasting."

"*I* can bear testimony," said a beloved brother who

had spent fifteen years of the prime of life among the heathen, on the evening previous to his embarkation, to return to his field of labor, "I can bear testimony," said he, in the presence of more than a thousand people, "*from my own experience*, to the truth of that precious promise of Jesus Christ."

THE END.

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